DH
DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

Indian cricketers make appeal for Imran

Gavaskar, Kapil join former captains to demand better treatment for jailed former Pak PM

Page 13

Yogiraj to sculpt pillars at 87 spots that Gandhi visited in state

Page 4

THE OLD RIVALRY
IS DEAD.
NAMIBIA,
HERE IS YOUR CHANCE TO
START A NEW ONE.

Cricket was built on great rivalries and
today could be the beginning of a new one.

Flipkart, the guys known for great deals,
have a deal that's bound to give you 'boosebumps'.
If you defeat the premium fast team today,
you'll get prize money as well as a very special
trophy from us. Not to mention, bragging rights
over your new rivals too. Now that's a great deal.

As your proud sponsors, that's the least
we could do. Just do your warm ups (the proper one)
and best of luck for the game. And psst...
don't worry about your trophy.
We'll keep it under lock and key.

NAMIBIA | Flipkart

OFFICIAL SPONSOR

71-year-old beaten to death by sons

BENGALURU, DHNS: A retired BMTC conductor died after he was assaulted by his sons with a baseball bat over a property dispute in Indiranagar.

The deceased has been identified as Munikrishnappa (71), a resident of Doopanahalli. He worked in the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC).

A senior police officer said that the incident took place on Sunday night when Munikrishnappa had gone walking after dinner. His sons, Mohan Kumar and Gajendra, followed him. Kumar allegedly assaulted his father with the baseball bat near a temple.

He was rushed to a private hospital where he died during treatment on Monday. Based on a complaint by Munikrishnappa's daughter-in-law, Divya, Indiranagar police registered a case and arrested Kumar. Gajendra is absconding.

Helpline sees surge in calls from elders facing abuse at home

Most calls related to property disputes and inheritance

ASHWIN BM
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Nightingales Elders Helpline, working with the Bengaluru city police commissioner, receives 800 to 1,000 calls a month from seniors facing harassment, mostly from their own children over property disputes and inheritance.

Counsellors at the call centre said the rise in distress calls is linked to the real estate boom, unemployment among youth, and weakening family values.

Swathi Bhandary of the Nightingales Elders Helpline said calls from Bengaluru Urban have surged, with many linked to family problems and abuse.

"When a call reaches the helpline, much damage has already happened to the relationship," Swathi told *DH*. "We see cases where children pressure parents to transfer property or name it in their favour, promising care in return. Once the transfer happens, they neglect them."

Counsellors link this trend to the city's real estate boom and high cost of living, which have fuelled a rush for inheritance.

Ramya S, a counsellor, said space constraints in Bengaluru often lead to verbal abuse and fights, which later turn into financial harassment or abandonment.

Data from April 2024 to March 2025 shows that out of 320 written complaints, 234 were linked to harassment or cheating by family members.

Operating from the police headquarters allows the helpline to respond faster than private centres. "Because we call from a police location, it helps us get a response from the opposite party," Swathi said.

The process includes separate and joint counselling sessions. If criminal intent or physical abuse is detected, the helpline directs victims to the police for Medico Legal Case (MLC) certification.

While the 112 emergency system resolves many doorstep disputes, a senior officer said deteriorating family values remains a social challenge. "Internal family neglect is a larger social issue that goes beyond standard policing," he said.

Helpline data: Bengaluru Urban (Apr 2024–Mar 2025)

- Total calls: **13,397**
- Written complaints registered: **320**
- Verbal complaints registered: **1,518**
- Primary abuse category: Elder abuse by family members (**234** written cases)

(If you or an elderly person you know needs assistance, call the toll-free helpline 1090)

Two murders in a fortnight

- In a recent incident in Vignan Nagar, a 33-year-old techie allegedly murdered his parents, a 60-year-old retired Indian Navy Captain and a 55-year-old dentist. Police said the son had been harassing them for money to fund business ventures.
- A 71-year-old retired BMTC conductor died after he was assaulted by his sons with a baseball bat over a property dispute in Indiranagar on Sunday.

Despite repeated awareness campaigns, parental oversight remains alarmingly low. The growing menace of wheeling, dangerous stunts performed on two-wheelers, continues to remain under the scanner. DH FILE PHOTO

BTP targets parents amid rise in underage driving

Special drive will issue fines, seize vehicles

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) has launched a special drive against underage driving after a rise in fatal accidents involving minors, including one near Hoskote.

Under the operation, the police will penalise minor drivers and book parents and vehicle owners under the Motor Vehicles Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Authorities can seize vehicles and produce parents before the court for allowing children to drive.

Joint Commissioner of Police Karthik Reddy said that despite repeated awareness campaigns, parental oversight remains very low. The menace of wheeling, with stunts on two-wheelers, is also under the scanner.

In 2025 alone, 646 cases of wheeling were recorded, including 159 cases against minors and their parents.

Zero-tolerance policy

Under the new special drive, the BTP will not only issue fines, but will also seize vehicles found being operated by underage persons.

"We have also decided to produce the owners or parents directly before the court," Reddy noted.

The police will invoke the BNS Act to ensure stricter legal consequences for guardians who encourage or ignore their children taking the wheel before the legal age.

The BTP has urged school and college administrations to step up efforts in educating students about road safety.

"Road safety is a shared responsibility. We request the public to cooperate and parents to ensure their children do not touch a vehicle until they are legally licensed," Reddy said.

Surge in violations

Data released by the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) shows a rising trend. Cases against underage driving under the Motor Vehicles Act have increased four-fold in just two years.

Year	Underage driving cases
2023	95
2024	197
2025	414

Cop sprints 1 km to nab chain snatcher

BENGALURU, DHNS: A police constable chased down a chain snatcher for nearly a kilometre through Bapujinagar and recovered gold jewellery worth Rs 6 lakh, officials said.

The suspect allegedly snatched a 40-gram gold chain from Bapujinagar resident Drakshayani around 7.30 pm on February 5 and tried to flee.

Hanumanta Putani, posted in the City Armed Reserve (CAR), spotted the fleeing man and gave chase. Running through lanes and by-lanes for nearly a kilometre, the constable overpowered and caught the suspect, identified as Syed Jafar.

"I was on my night shift duty at the CID office. I noticed the woman screaming for help as she was targeted by the chain-snatcher. I parked my motorbike next to the footpath and chased him. I managed to grab the chain from him and return it over to her. I later alerted the Vijaynagar police, who then arrested him," Putani said.

Encroachment in Byrasandra; complainant seeks action

BENGALURU, DHNS

A 2021 survey by the Revenue Department found encroachment of five guntas in Survey No 64 of Byrasandra village, which falls under the Bengaluru Central City Corporation.

Krishna Byre Gowda

Subsequently, revenue officials wrote to the civic body, urging it to withdraw the khatas issued to five private individuals who had built independent houses on the government land.

Venkatesh Raju, a resident of GM Palya, said the corporation has not acted on the tahsildar's letter despite multiple reminders. He pointed out that the land is worth several crores of rupees and warned that failure to clear the encroachment could encourage the encroachers to grab another 15 guntas of government land that is currently fenced.

Raju said he had approached the Karnataka Land Grabbing Prevention Special Court in 2019 with a complaint. During the course of the hearing, one of the alleged encroachers fled the site ahead of an inspection by revenue officials, while the others approached the court for relief.

Responding to a question in the assembly in December 2024, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said Survey No 64 comprises a total of 25 guntas of land. Of this, 15 guntas are free of encroachment, while the remaining portion has been encroached upon. "Of that, about five guntas of land is being used as a public road," he said.

BWSSB chief highlights use of technology for water management at AI summit

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has emerged as a global model for integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into urban water management, said Ramprasat Manohar V.

Ramprasat Manohar V

Manohar, who was part of the panel discussion titled 'From Models to the Masses: Deploying AI for Climate Resilience' at the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, said the utility has transitioned from a traditional service provider to a smart, data-driven organisation that leverages technology to ensure water security for millions.

"By deploying AI tools across our pumping stations and sewage treatment plants (STPs), we have optimised operations and achieved annual energy savings exceeding Rs 40 crore.

"This is not just a financial achievement, but also a significant environmental milestone, as we have drastically reduced our carbon footprint," he said.

He added that the use of AI-enabled robotics has been a game-changer in reducing water leakage.

"We are now using advanced robotics to detect leakages and identify illegal connections with precision. This shift from reactive to predictive maintenance allows us to conserve precious water that was previously lost, ensuring it reaches the citizens who need it the most."

Goods wagon derailment between Bidadi & Ramanagara disrupts 5 trains

BENGALURU, DHNS: One of the wagons of a new modified goods train derailed between Bidadi and Ramanagara around 5 pm on Tuesday, disrupting at least five train services.

The South Western Railway (SWR) dispatched an accident relief train from KSR Bengaluru to the site to expedite restoration efforts.

The track was certified fit for train operations at 10 pm, and services in the affected section resumed subsequently, according to a news release.

The railway authorities cancelled three trains — 06526 (Ashokapuram-KSR Bengaluru), 66553 (KSR Bengaluru-Ashokapuram) and 66580 (Ashokapuram-KSR Bengaluru) — while train number 06525 (KSR Bengaluru-Ashokapuram) was short-terminated at Kengeri.

The KSR Bengaluru-Mysuru Express (train number 16216) was rescheduled from its origin point by an hour, the SWR said in a release.

The NMG (New Modified Goods) train that derailed between Bidadi and Ramanagara on Tuesday. PHOTO: SWR

26-year-old woman dies after being hit by speeding biker

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 26-year-old HDFC Bank employee was killed when a speeding two-wheeler struck her in Rajajinagar on Monday.

The deceased, Yogeshwari, was from outside the city and lived in a paying guest accommodation. She worked at the HDFC home loan branch in Rajajinagar.

The accident occurred around 12.45 pm when Yogeshwari stepped out of her office for lunch. CCTV footage shows her crossing near the median with caution on a stretch where white-topping work was underway.

As she moved through the stretch where roadwork narrowed the carriageway, a speeding biker coming from the Rajajinagar entrance towards Suguna Hospital crashed into her. The force of the collision hurled Yogeshwari several feet into the air before she came crashing down on the road.

A colleague walking a few steps behind Yogeshwari recalled the incident. "We were returning from lunch and had just crossed one section of the road. The biker was at high speed and hit her. I was in shock," she said.

Police said the biker lost control and skidded nearly 100 metres down the road. The rider remained conscious and was taken to hospital by passersby. Yogeshwari suffered critical internal injuries and multiple fractures.

Locals rushed Yogeshwari to a nearby private hospital. Despite intensive medical efforts, she did not respond to treatment and was declared dead on Monday night.

The Rajajinagar traffic police have registered a case against the bike rider for rash and negligent driving. "The stretch is narrow due to ongoing white-topping work, and motorists are expected to slow down," a police officer said.

Drugs worth Rs 21.50 crore confiscated; 15 peddlers held

BENGALURU, DHNS: In yet another major crackdown on drug trafficking, the Anti-Narcotics Wing of the City Crime Branch (CCB), along with the police, has arrested 15 drug peddlers, including three foreign nationals, in connection with the sale of banned narcotic substances across the city.

The arrests were made following raids conducted on different dates within the limits of the Amruthahalli, Hebbagodi, JB Nagar, Sheshadripuram, Mahalakshmi Layout and Govindapura police stations.

Police seized 9.460 kg hydro ganja, 34 kg ganja, 5.677 kg MDMA, 131 grams cocaine, 462 ml hashish oil, 29 LSD pills and 27 grams LSD strips. A car, a two-wheeler, four mobile phones and Rs 24,500 in cash were also confiscated.

The total value of the seized contraband is estimated at Rs 10.59 crore, while its market value is pegged at around Rs 21.50 crore, police said.

During interrogation, the accused allegedly admitted to procuring drugs from foreign and inter-state sources and selling them to the public, including college students and IT/BT employees, to make quick money.

4-yr-old forgotten in car; police step in to rescue child

BENGALURU, DHNS: Patrolmen from the Hennur police station rescued a child accidentally left behind in a car by his parents, police officials said on Tuesday.

Police said the family, who live in Ponnappa Layout, returned from a trip on February 14 at 8.26 pm.

The parents did not notice their four-year-old child was still asleep inside the car.

The driver had driven away with the child. The parents informed Namma-112 about the incident by phone, the city police said in a statement.

Handlers of the helpline conveyed the information to ASI Manjappa Koppal and Head Constable Satish, who were on duty in Hoysala-51.

"They reached the spot within two minutes, tracked the vehicle's live location, contacted the driver, and directed him to bring the car back to the apartment. After confirming the child was safe, the child was handed over to the parents. The officers counselled the family and advised them to exercise caution to prevent such incidents in future," the police said.

KR Market basement parking set to open in two weeks

BENGALURU, DHNS: A parking facility in the refurbished basement of KR Market is nearing completion.

Top officials of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) and Bengaluru Central City Corporation inspected the site, which may open to the public in two weeks.

The parking lot on the ground floor has space for 200 cars and 400 two-wheelers. The basement had remained in a dilapidated condition for a long time.

GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao said 90 per cent of the work has been completed, including drainage, electricity connection, fire safety measures and 61 cameras.

He directed the operator to keep the place clean and asked officials to repair the toilet on the first floor, which was not in use.

Fake cops gag couple, flee with cash & gold in broad daylight

BENGALURU, DHNS: Two men posing as policemen allegedly robbed Rs 20 lakh in cash and 500 grams of gold ornaments after gagging a couple at knifepoint in Byadarahalli.

The incident occurred at BEL Layout around 3 pm on Monday.

The accused, dressed as policemen, knocked on the door of Hombalegowda, 53, a real estate agent and contractor.

When he opened the door, one of the men introduced himself as a sub inspector from the Yelahanka police station and entered the house holding a diary, Hombalegowda stated in his complaint.

Before Hombalegowda could react, the second accused came into the house. The duo then took out knives and threatened him.

Hearing the commotion, Hombalegowda's wife Mangalamma came out into the hall, but the accused allegedly threatened her, too. They taped the couple's mouths and tied their hands before ransacking the house.

Rs 20L, 500g gold looted

Despite Mangalamma offering her mangalsutra and pleading with them to spare their lives, the accused refused and searched all the rooms.

They decamped with Rs 20 lakh in cash and 500 grams of gold ornaments. The couple's mobile phones and the CCTV DVR were also taken before the accused fled.

Police said a child present in the house was not harmed.

A case has been registered at the Byadarahalli police station, and a special team has been formed to trace the accused.

Woman sexually harassed in full public view in Indiranagar

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 36-year-old woman was sexually abused by a group of unidentified men in full public view near a restaurant in eastern Bengaluru's Indiranagar, according to a police complaint.

The private company employee was visiting Chickpet Donne Biryani House with a male friend when a group of men arrived in a car and began passing lewd comments at her.

Shocked, she tried to leave the spot, but the men continued to pass vulgar comments and make sexual advances. When she objected, they allegedly cornered her, abused her verbally and even threatened to run her over.

As she attempted to leave in an autorickshaw, the men blocked her path and pushed her. The complaint also stated that a few women were inside the car at the time.

The incident was captured on CCTV cameras.

Based on her complaint, the Indiranagar police registered a case and launched a manhunt for the suspects.

Counter-complaint

However, the police have also registered a counter-complaint against the woman's friend for allegedly showing the middle finger at the group during a verbal altercation.

LOVE DELIVERED

KIA ships 60 million rose stems this Valentine's season

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) shipped around 60 million rose stems this Valentine's season, marking a 38% year-on-year increase in stem volumes, according to a statement from the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), the airport operator.

The 60 million stems, weighing more than 2,700 metric tonnes (MT), resulted in a 64% rise in total tonnage compared to last year. The roses were shipped to 26 international and 47 domestic destinations. While domestic shipments recorded a 79% increase in tonnage, international shipments remained steady.

According to the statement, "International shipments remained steady at 305 MT, with Singapore (SIN) emerging as the top overseas destination, followed by Kuala Lumpur (KUL), Abu Dhabi (AUH), New York (JFK), and Kuwait (KWI). New international destinations added this season include Los Angeles (LAX), London Gatwick (LGW), Dallas Fort Worth (DFW), Toronto (YYZ), and Orlando (MCO)."

Of the 2,402 MT of roses shipped domestically, Delhi and Kolkata continued to anchor demand, followed by Guwahati, Mumbai, and Jaipur. The airport leveraged its cold chain facilities, equipped with real-time tracking and advanced technology, to efficiently handle the surge in cargo volume.

Bengaluru Wednesday, February 18, 2026 Pages 20 Vol 79 No 49 ₹7

www.deccanherald.com Follow us on @deccanherald

DH

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

Rahman sworn in as B'desh PM

Modi invites leader to India

Pages 10, 13

State

HC quashes BJP's defamation case against Rahul Gandhi P.7

World

US civil rights leader Jesse Jackson dies at 84 P.13

World

11 securitymen killed in Pak attack P.13

Sports

Australia out of T20 World Cup P.16

MEGA DEALS: India, France renew 10-yr defence pact

Modi, Macron launch Kolar H125 chopper plant

KALYAN RAY & MAHESH KULKARNI
NEW DELHI/VEMGAL (KOLAR DIST), DHNS

India and France on Tuesday gave a major push to bilateral defence relationship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron inaugurating a key helicopter manufacturing facility in Karnataka even as the two nations renewed a 10-year defence cooperation agreement.

In addition, New Delhi and Paris inked an agreement on setting up a production unit in India to manufacture Hammer missiles used by Rafale combat jets and formalised an arrangement on reciprocal deployment of officers at Indian Army and French Land Forces establishments.

"France is one of India's oldest strategic partners. And together with President Macron, we have given this strategic partnership unprecedented depth and energy... The inauguration of the helicopter assembly line in India is another shining example of this deep trust," Prime Minister Modi said in a statement after the summit meeting.

"We are proud that India and France will jointly manufacture the world's only helicopter capable of flying to the heights of Mount Everest. And we will also export it to the entire world," he noted, referring to the H125 Tata-Airbus helicopter assembly line at Vemgal in Kolar district.

The H125 is the only helicopter in history to have landed on the summit of Mount Everest, giving it a performance ceiling that exceeds existing light utility fleets.

Speaking after inaugurating the helicopter assembly line, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said India's defence manufacturing ecosystem has undergone a structural transformation over the past decade following reforms initiated by the Modi government.

Singh said the investment in the H-125 programme would exceed Rs 1,000 crore.

President Macron said, "From Rafale jets to submarines, we are expanding defence cooperation." The two sides also agreed to make Exercise Shakti – wargaming between Indian and French land forces – an annual affair instead of holding it once in two years. Last week, the Defence Ministry accorded an initial clearance to buy 114 Rafale fighter aircraft from France for the Indian Air Force in a Rs 3.25-lakh crore deal. IAF currently flies 36 Rafale jets and last year, India signed another major contract to purchase 24 Rafale-M for the Navy.

▸ Macron, Page 3B

UPGRADING TIES

- Formalise arrangement on reciprocal deployment of officers at Indian Army and French Land Forces establishments
- Exercise Shakti, wargaming between Indian and French land forces, to be annual affair
- New Delhi, Paris ink agreement on setting up production unit in India to manufacture Hammer missiles used by Rafale combat jets

PM Narendra Modi with French President Emmanuel Macron in Mumbai on Tuesday. PTI

25% of India's defence output by pvt sector

In a major shift from the country's public sector-dominated defence equipment manufacturing model, the private sector in India today accounts for a quarter of total defence production, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in Vemgal, Kolar district, on Tuesday. Page 10

India inks critical mineral pact with France

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India on Tuesday inked a pact with France to step up bilateral cooperation in critical minerals and metals – continuing its move to lessen its dependence on China for essential components of clean energy technologies and industries.

New Delhi will soon ink similar pacts for cooperation in critical minerals with Brazil and Canada, too.

Following a meeting between PM Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron in Mumbai, the two sides issued a joint declaration of intent to collaborate on critical minerals and metals. They exchanged letters of intent to establish a Centre of Advanced Materials between India's Department of Science and Technology and the National Centre for Scientific Research, a.k.a. CNRS, France.

Modi and Macron agreed on the constitution of a Joint Advanced Technology Development Group.

"Today, we are strengthening our cooperation in critical minerals, biotechnology, and advanced materials," Modi said, as he and Macron addressed reporters in Mumbai.

▸ France, Page 3B

CM himself will reveal decision on leadership, says Shivakumar

BENGALURU, DHNS: CM Siddaramaiah himself will reveal the decision taken on the leadership issue, Deputy CM K Shivakumar said on Tuesday.

DK Shivakumar

"A decision has been taken by the CM, the high command and me. When the time comes, there will be clarity. The CM himself will inform the people," Shivakumar said. He was reacting to minister HC Mahadevappa's statement. On Monday, the minister said none can force the high command to intervene in the dispute.

Details on Page 6

'AI: India to attract over Rs 18L cr investment'

UMA KANNAN
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Ashwini Vaishnaw

India positions itself as a global hub for Artificial Intelligence as the country is expecting over $200 billion (Rs 18 lakh crore) investments across the five layers of AI stack. Announcing this during a press briefing at the India AI Impact Summit, Union Minister for IT Ashwini Vaishnaw said this investment is expected in the coming two years.

"Investment is coming in across the five layers of the AI stack. We have seen venture capital firms and other players committing funds to application developments and also for further research in cutting-edge models, because the next level of models will come from engineering innovation as well as mathematical innovation," the minister said.

He added that AI is impacting every sector and that difficulties in the AI ecosystem must be addressed through a techno-legal approach. "These (challenges) cannot be resolved merely through regulations or by passing a law alone," he said.

On deepfakes, the minister stressed the need for stronger regulation. "It is a problem which is growing day-by-day and there is a need for protecting our children and society from these harms. We have initiated a dialogue with the industry," he told reporters.

▸ AI, Page 3B

Yelahanka to get India's largest train coach terminal

BENGALURU, DHNS: India's largest coaching terminal has been planned in northern Bengaluru's Yelahanka at a cost of Rs 5,754 crore, Minister of State for Railways V Somanna said on Tuesday.

The terminal is proposed to be built next to the Rail Wheel Factory (RWF) and its final location survey (FLS) has been completed, he added.

He was speaking to reporters after flagging off the experimental stoppage of four trains at Nayandahalli and inaugurating a railway overbridge in Vijayanagar, both in western Bengaluru.

The South Western Railway (SWR) had initially proposed the terminal in Devanahalli. Page 3B

GRIDLOCK

Slow traffic: Cops counter TomTom survey numbers

DH SPECIAL

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru's ranking as the second most congested city in the world in the latest TomTom Traffic Index has once again drawn attention to the city's traffic woes.

However, an analysis of real-time data available on the ASTraM app by the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) has revealed that the travel time is close to 10% faster than what was reported in the TomTom index.

According to BTP, in 2025, commuters spent an average of 34.5 minutes to travel 10 km during peak hours as against the TomTom index report, which said the average travel time during peak hours was 38 minutes.

The average rush hour speed was determined to be 18.2 kmph according to BTP, as against 15.8 kmph recorded by the TomTom index.

The officials opined that the TomTom index may not indicate the ground reality completely.

"The index uses the data available on its app and this might make the sample size smaller. In contrast, ASTraM uses data from Google maps, MapmyIndia, and TomTom to ascertain the traffic flow. Hence, the ASTraM data reflects ground reality," Karthik Reddy, Joint Commissioner of Traffic, Bengaluru City, told *DH*.

The BTP also claimed that the evening peak variability fell from 17% in 2024 to 11% in 2025.

"We have improved the inter-departmental coordination and as a result, any breakdown in vehicles, flooding, or a tree fall is cleared faster," Reddy said.

▸ Traffic, Page 3B

TRAFFIC LOGJAM

Parameter (for 10 km)	TomTom Index	BTP
Average travel time during peak hours	38 min	34.5 min
Average evening peak hour travel time	40 min	38 min
Average morning peak hour travel time	35.8 min	30 min
Rush hour speed	15.8 kmph	18.2 kmph

even hospitals

Get robotic surgery for your knee pain.

Without the pain of paying extra robotic charges.

If knee pain has been troubling you for some time,
you've probably tried the usual options.
Medicines. Physiotherapy. Rest.

For many people, that helps. For some, it doesn't.

When the pain keeps coming back, doctors may suggest surgery.

Today, that often means ***robotic knee surgery.***
It allows the surgeon to plan the procedure more precisely.
But it also usually means a higher cost.

At Even Hospitals, we've removed that part.

For a limited period, we're offering ***robotic knee replacement surgery with no additional robotic charges.***

You'll meet a joint replacement team that has collectively performed ***over 5,000 joint*** replacement surgeries.
Before anything is decided, you'll be evaluated properly and advised on what actually makes sense for your knee.

Ortho Care Package – ₹750

- X-ray (Any Joint)
- CRP
- ESR
- Uric Acid
- Calcium
- RA Factor / Anti-CCP
- Orthopaedic Consultation

Doctors available for consultation

Dr. Avinash Parthasarathy
M.S(Ortho), MCh.Orth(UK), FIAS
Senior Consultant, Orthopedic Joint Replacement Surgeon
OPD: 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Dr. Prashanth Nagaraj
MS (Ortho), MRCS (UK), FRCS
Senior Consultant, Orthopedic Joint Replacement Surgeon
OPD: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Dr. Abrar Mohammed
M.S(Ortho), FRGUHS (Arthroplasty), Dip.FM (FIFA)
Consultant Orthopaedic & Joint Replacement Surgeon
OPD: 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Book your consultation

Even Hospitals, Race Course Road |
Call: 080 4588 8900 | Visit: hospitals.even.in

*Terms and conditions apply. Surgery cost varies based on clinical evaluation. Offer valid till 28th Feb.

B'luru airport will add 30-mn capacity by 2029: BIAL COO

Terminal 1 upgrade to add 10 million annual passengers

GIRISH NAIR, COO, BIAL

"Indian carriers have placed some of the largest aircraft orders globally. We must provide infrastructure to support their growth and our aspiration to become a hub.

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) has drawn up a 20-year master plan to stay "slightly ahead of demand", with Terminal 1 (T1) refurbishment and Terminal 2 (T2) Phase 2 expansion forming the core of its near-term growth strategy, said COO Girish Nair.

The ongoing refurbishment of T1 — the domestic terminal — is expected to add 10 million passengers in annual capacity.

While works on the eastern side, including baggage-handling upgrades, are complete, the western side is under execution.

The recent rejigging of the kerbside access at T1 was also a part of the refurbishment plan, aimed at easing congestion and improving passenger flow, Nair told *DH*.

Phase 2 of T2, for which tenders have been floated, will add another 20 million capacity. BIAL aims to complete the expansion by 2029.

"Indian carriers have placed some of the largest aircraft orders globally. We must provide the infrastructure to support their growth and our aspiration to become a hub," Nair said, referring to the expansion plans of Air India and IndiGo, both of which have identified Bengaluru as a key airport partner. With T1 and T2 expansions, the airport's overall capacity is expected to approach 80 million annually.

On the airside, a west cross-field taxiway, expected by the end of 2026 or by early 2027, will connect the two runways on the western flank, reducing taxi time and improving aircraft turnaround efficiency. "If we can reduce taxi time and enhance efficiency, there are fuel savings and better on-time performance," he added.

Beyond capacity addition, BIAL is betting on hub development. The airport is targeting stronger links to Korea and China in Asia, and sees potential in connecting traffic between Australia and Europe via Bengaluru. The team will pitch new routes at the upcoming Routes Asia 2026 event in China.

"Airports are integral to tourism. Along with the state tourism department, tour operators and everyone else who participates in the tourism industry, we are all a part of the same ecosystem. We're having discussions with the tourism department about how we can work together and improve international connectivity. Air connectivity has a huge impact on the state economy," he said.

Private transporters seek dist-level cap on Shakti scheme

For development of paid bus terminal near Race Course Rd

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Federation of Karnataka State Private Transport Associations submitted its pre-Budget wishlist to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, seeking relief for a sector it described as "distressed" due to policy imbalances, rising taxation, unchecked aggregator operations, and lack of financial support.

Among its key demands were an immediate amendment to the law to ban bike taxis, restriction of the Shakti free bus travel scheme to district-level travel, reduction in road tax, and development of the Race Course Road area into a pay-and-use bus terminal to ease congestion at Majestic and Anand Rao Circle.

The federation claimed that high road tax has led to 9,348 vehicles being registered in neighbouring states, resulting in an estimated revenue loss of Rs 300–400 crore to Karnataka.

It said sleeper buses pay around Rs 4,440 per seat per quarter and seater buses Rs 3,850, translating to an annual tax burden of Rs 5–6 lakh per vehicle. This, it argued, has pushed many operators to opt for out-of-state registration.

Free bus travel under the Shakti scheme. DH FILE PHOTO

More than 3,000 non-AC 16- and 22-seater buses have reportedly been registered outside Karnataka due to high taxes, the federation added.

Other demands include strict enforcement of existing rules mandating aggregator companies to pay a 1.5% royalty to the government; setting up prepaid automated taxi and autorickshaw stands at bus stations, railway stations, metro stations and major commercial hubs; provision of low-interest loans and subsidies for purchasing new vehicles; and separate classification and financial support for school vans.

The association also sought extension of the operational life of CNG vehicles from 15 to 20 years with subsidies; amendment of Rule 153 to ensure older vehicles are taxed based on fitness certificates; subsidised housing for drivers in Bengaluru; inclusion of lung diseases under occupational welfare benefits; recognition of heart attacks during mandated rest periods as compensable accidents up to the age of 70; transfer of commercial vehicle cess collections into a dedicated welfare fund; and establishment of government-run driver training centres in every district to help reduce accidents.

BMTC collects Rs 6.09 lakh in penalties from passengers

BENGALURU, DHNS: The BMTC's checking staff collected Rs 6.09 lakh in penalties from 2,879 passengers in January. The state-run bus operator's staff checked 18,466 trips and collected Rs 5.85 lakh from 2,637 ticketless passengers. In addition, 1,679 cases were registered against conductors for dereliction of duty.

The checking staff penalised another 242 men for occupying seats reserved for women and fined them Rs 24,200.

The BMTC advised passengers to purchase tickets and daily/weekly/monthly passes while travelling on its buses. It also warned male passengers against occupying seats reserved for women, according to a release.

Legal opinion sought on Kadugodi forest dispute

BENGALURU: The Revenue Department on Tuesday advised two state government departments staking claim over 120 acres of land in the Kadugodi plantation area to obtain a legal opinion to resolve the dispute.

Last year, the Forest Department announced that it had cleared encroachments on 120 acres of forest land in the Kadugodi plantation. Subsequently, more than 30 petitions were filed before the High Court of Karnataka challenging the action. The forest minister has since maintained that the land is classified as forest and will be retained as such to serve as a lung space for east Bengaluru.

However, last month, the Commerce and Industries Department wrote to the Revenue Department, stating that the land had been acquired by the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) for development of an industrial park, though physical possession was yet to be handed over. The Forest Department, on the other hand, has reiterated that the land continues to be forest land.

On Tuesday, Revenue Department Additional Chief Secretary Rajender Kumar Kataria chaired a meeting during which both departments presented documents supporting their respective claims.

"Considering that both parties are government departments, it was decided to seek a legal opinion on the matter. The Forest Department informed the meeting that it has already sought legal advice," Kataria told *DH*.

Free BMTC travel for PUC Exam-1 students

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) will allow students taking their PUC Exam-1 free travel between their residence and exam centres from February 28 to March 17.

Students will need to produce exam hall/admission tickets.

The BMTC has promised to operate additional trips based on demand and provide request stops near the exam centres, according to a release fom the transport corporation.

Special trains to Kalaburagi, Bidar, Kolkata

BENGALURU, DHNS: The South Western Railway (SWR) will continue to operate special trains between SMVT Bengaluru and Bidar, Bengaluru Cantonment and Kalaburagi, and Yelahanka and Santragachi (near Kolkata) with existing timings, stoppages and composition for Holi.

Train number 06539 SMVT Bengaluru-Bidar Bi-weekly Express Special, running on Fridays and Sundays, will run until March 29.

Train number 06540 Bidar–SMVT Bengaluru Bi-weekly Express Special, running on Saturdays and Mondays, has been extended until March 30.

Train number 06207 Bengaluru Cantonment–Kalaburagi Weekly Express Special, running on Saturdays, has been extended until March 28.

Train number 06208 Kalaburagi–Bengaluru Cantonment Weekly Express Special, running on Sundays, has been extended to run until March 29.

Train number 02863 Santragachi–Yelahanka Weekly Express Special, running on Thursdays, will run until March 26.

Train number 02864 Yelahanka–Santragachi Weekly Express Special, running on Saturdays, has been extended to run until March 28.

केंद्रीय विद्यालय डीज़ल लोको शेड, कृष्णराजपुरम, बेंगलूरु – 36
केन्द्रीय विद्यालय डीज़ल लोको शेड कृष्णराजपुरम बेंगलूरु 560 036

KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA
DIESEL LOCO SHED, KRISHNARAJAPURAM, BENGALURU-560036
Website: https://krishnarajapuram.kvs.ac.in
E-mail ID: kvkrpuramdls@gmail.com Ph: 080-25616000
F.13049/KV KR Puram/2025- 26/ Date: 17/02/2026

Walk-in-Interview

To prepare the panel of Part Time/Contractual Teachers for the academic year 2026-27, Walk-in-Interview for the following post will be conducted on 24.02.2026 at 9:00 AM at KV Krishnarajapuram, Bengaluru. Registration Time: 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM

DATE	POST
24.02.2026	1. Post Graduate Teachers-Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Computer Science, English, Hindi. 2. Trained Graduate Teachers – English, Hindi, Science, Mathematics, Social Science and Sanskrit 3. Primary Teachers
	Other Posts - Counsellor, Staff Nurse, Special Educator, Computer Instructor, Sports Instructor (Hockey, Basketball), Yoga Instructor and Kannada language Teacher
Important Information	1. Candidates are required to appear for registration with duly filled application form, original certificates of qualification, one set of self-attested copies of certificates and 2 passport size photographs. 2. No Travelling Allowance (TA/DA) will be provided for the interview. 3. For more details like downloading application form, eligibility criteria, minimum qualification etc. visit the school website: **https://krishnarajapuram.kvs.ac.in**

Principal
Kendriya Vidyalaya Krishnarajapuram
Bengaluru

सत्यमेव जयते

Government of India
Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India
3rd Floor, Udaan Bhawan, Safdarjung Airport,
New Delhi-110003

Invitation of applications for hiring of Junior Consultant (Statistics) (Total three (03) posts) in Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India

Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA) invites applications from eligible candidates as Junior Consultant (Statistics) (Total three (03) posts) for attending work as per Terms of Reference (TOR). Candidate with requisite qualification and experience as prescribed would be hired in the respective category as per vacancy indicated. Vacancies are liable to be changed without any prior notice and without assigning any reason whatsoever.

2. The details including eligibility criteria, Terms of Reference (TOR) etc. are available in vacancy notice published on the AERA's website: www.aera.gov.in Last date of receipt of application is **10.03.2026 upto 5.30 P.M.** Applications to be submitted as per details/mode mentioned in the vacancy notice. Applications received after due date and time will not be entertained.

Deputy Chief
Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India, 3rd Floor, Udaan Bhawan, Safdarjung Airport, New Delhi - 110003

CBC 03112/12/0019/2526

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-Auction for leasing of Parcel Space, Parking & Advertising and Miscellaneous contracts by Bengaluru Division.

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites bidders for E-Auctions on the following dates:
1. Catering : 03.03.2026, 04.03.2026, 09.03.2026
2. Parking : 20.02.2026, 25.02.2026, 04.03.2026, 10.03.2026
3. Advertising : 20.02.2026, 04.03.2026, 09.03.2026
4. Parcels: 18.02.2026, 26.02.2026, 05.03.2026, 10.03.2026
5. Pay & Use : 17.02.2026, 05.03.2026, 09.03.2026
6. Miscellaneous : 18.02.2026, 23.02.2026, 27.02.2026, 05.03.2026, 06.03.2026, 10.03.2026

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager
PUB/900/AAS/PRB/SWR/2025-26 **Bengaluru**

Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform ticktes, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY @SWRAILWAYHQ @sw_railways

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

Tender Notice No.: e-Tender/2026/07, Date: 16.02.2026. For and on behalf of President of India, the Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.), South Eastern Railway, Kharagpur-721301 invites e-tender for the following works **before 15.00 hrs.** on the date mentioned against items and will be **opened at 15.30 hrs. Sl.No.**-1. **Tender No.: E-KGP-EAST-11-2026. Description of work:** Manufacturing and Supply of Alumino Thermic welding portions of 60Kg/90UTS (1000 Nos.) 60Kg/60El-R260 grade rails (8453 Nos.)as approved by RDSO and welding in-situ with single shot crucible as per IR Specification in connection with track renewal and maintenance work in Kharagpur division under the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN (East)/Kharagpur. (Total 9453 Joints). **Tender Value:** ₹ 2,13,71,446.38. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 2,56,900. **Sl.No.**-2. **Tender No.: E-KGP-WEST-05-2026. Description of work:** Girimaidan, Gokulpur and Rakhamines:Provision of extension, raising, resurfacing of platform and other amenities under the jurisdiction DEN/West/Kharagpur. **Tender Value:** ₹ 5,95,88,578.85. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 4,48,000. **Sl.No.**-3. **Tender No.: E-KGP-WEST-06-2026. Description of work:** Improvement and upgradation of existing subway at LC No. 60, 139A and 129A near Kalaikunda, Gokulpur & Kharagpur station under the jurisdiction of ADEN/WEST/Kharagpur. **Tender Value:** ₹ 2,32,46,671.73. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 2,66,200. **Tender document Cost:** ₹ 0 (for Sl.No. 1 to 3 each). **Date of opening:** 06.03.2026 (for Sl.No. 1) & 09.03.2026 (for Sl.No. 2 & 3). **Completion Period of the work:** 12 months (for Sl.No. 1 to 3 each). **Bidding start date:** From 20.02.2026 and up to 15.00 hrs. on 06.03.2026 (for Sl.No. 1) & from 23.02.2026 and up to 15.00 hrs. on 09.03.2026 (for Sl.No. 2 to 3). Interested tenderers may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full details/description/specifications of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these works will be accepted. **N.B.:** Prospective bidders may regularly visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all tenders. **(PR-1199)**

झारखण्ड राज्य भवन निर्माण निगम लिमिटेड
(Govt. of Jharkhand Undertaking)
Corporation Identification No.-U45201JH2015SGC003325
Regd. Office: - Building Construction Department, Govt. of Jharkhand, Project Building, P.O. - Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004, Jharkhand
Phone No.:- 0651-2446257/2446258/2446259, e-mail:-jsbccljharkhand@gmail.com

VERY SHORT TERM E-QUOTATION INVITATION NOTICE FOR DETERMINATION OF RATE

NIQ. No:10/2025-26 Date- 17.02.2026

Online Quotations are invited for the work **Construction of Sports Complex in Giridih Block under Giridih District** for non-schedule Materials from Reputed Shop Keepers, Manufacturers, Suppliers, retailers, Distributors, Timber Merchants and others for items. They should quote their rates for unit mentioned in the table. If they do not deal all of the below mentioned items then they are allowed to quote their rate for part of the items which ever they deal with. The rates should be exclusive of all types of Taxes, GST, Contractor's Profit and overhead charges etc. but inclusive of Royalty and carriage. All Rates should be exclusive of Labour Cess.

Term and Condition
1. The quotationer shall furnish PAN, GST registration no.
2. The rate quoted by quotationer shall be firm, final and unconditional.
3. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject/cancel any or all quotations without assigning any reason thereof.

Note:-

1	Last Date/Time of Submission of E-Quotations on Website	25.02.2026 at 05:00 PM
2	Date/Time of opening of E-Quotations	26.02.2026 at 05:00 PM
3	Name & Address of office Inviting E-Quotations	e-Procurement Cell, Jharkhand State Building Construction Corporation Ltd., Ranchi.
4	Helpline Number of e-procurement Cell	0651-2446259
5	e-mail ID	jsbccljharkhand@gmail.com

Note :– Any change can be seen on Website http:// Jharkhandtenders.gov.in.
Any other information can be seen on http:// Jharkhandtenders.gov.in.

Nodal Officer
e-Procurement Cell
Jharkhand State Building Construction Corporation Ltd., Ranchi.

PR.NO.373160 Jharkhand State Building Construction Corp. ltd.(25-26):D

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

International Conference: 'Multi-disciplinary Studies in Science and Technology'; Nrupatunga University; 10 am.

Workshop: One-day training workshop on preparation for competitive exams for students; Only for Dr B R Ambedkar Government Post-Matric Hostels in Bengaluru City District; Social Welfare Department, Dr B R Ambedkar Memorial Trust, State Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Employees Association of Social Welfare Department; Dr B R Ambedkar Bhavan, Millers Road, Vasanth Nagar; 10.30 am.

CULTURAL

Book release: M Chidananda Murthy's comprehensive literary collection and various reprinted works; Kannada Development Authority; Nayana Hall, Kannada Bhavan, JC Road; 10 am.

Book launch: German translation of Hampa Nagarajaiah's 'Charuvasant'; Kamala Hampana Sahitya Vedike, National Education Institute, Sapna Book; HN Auditorium, National College, Basavanagudi; 5 pm.

RELIGIOUS

Sarvajna Jayanti: Sarvajna and Thiruvallavar Souharda Vedike; Near Kuvempu Statue, Malleswaram Circle; 9.30 am.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Mainly clear sky

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	29.8°C
Minimum	17.5°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	38%
Sunset (Feb 18)	6:26 pm
Sunrise (Feb 19)	6:41 am
Moonrise	6:29 am
Moonset	6:24 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

Case against BJP's Assam office-bearers over 'offensive' video

BENGALURU, DHNS

High Grounds police have registered an FIR against the convenor and co-convenor of the BJP in Assam following an "offensive" video by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, which was deleted following backlash.

The FIR was filed on February 12, following a complaint by Ranjith Kumara, a functionary of the Congress in Karnataka. It names Biswajit Khaund, convenor, state social media department, BJP (Assam), and Ron Bikash Guarav, co-convenor.

He told the police that on February 7, when he was browsing X at the KPCC office in Bengaluru, he noticed an objectionable post from the official X handle of the BJP in Assam.

"This tweet, titled "Point Blank Shot...", contained an image/video depicting Chief Minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, aiming a gun-like weapon at a person appearing in Muslim community attire and look, and shooting the person. This picture/video, along with the political stance of the person depicted, the official nature of the handle, and its large number of followers, combined with the caption 'Point Blank Shot...', clearly conveys a threatening and provocative message that normalises and glorifies violence against a specific religious minority," the FIR noted.

The case was registered under BNS sections 192 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot, if rioting be committed; if not committed) and 353(2) (statements conducing to public mischief). Further investigation is underway, the police said.

Spl train to Delhi

BENGALURU, DHNS: The SWR will run a one-trip special train between Yeshwantpur and Hazrat Nizamuddin via Kacheguda with 23 coaches to clear extra rush.

Train no. 06569 will leave Yeshwantpur at 10.40 pm on Feb 25 & reach Hazrat Nizamuddin at 2.45 pm on Feb 27. In return direction, train no. 06570 will depart from Hazrat Nizamuddin at 7 am on March 1 & arrive at Yeshwantpur at 9.40 pm on March 2.

Now, no need for referral under AB-ArK at 4 pvt med college hosps

Govt exempts 291 procedures meant to be performed in govt hosps only

BENGALURU, DHNS

For the first time since its inception in 2018, the Ayushman Bharat-Arogya Karnataka (AB-ArK) scheme is set to allow medical procedures at four private medical college hospitals without referrals.

In addition, 291 procedures that were reserved to be performed only at government hospitals have also been unreserved, opening up more facilities for patients.

Earlier, referrals were a must for patients to get any facilities. Now, the health department has decided to conduct a pilot study at four private medical college hospitals (St John's Medical College, M S Ramaiah Medical College, Kempegowda Institute of Medical Sciences, Ambedkar Medical College Hospital) to ascertain if the scheme can work without referrals.

"There are close to 1,600 procedures that come under the scheme and patients can get any of them done at these four hospitals, without any referral. These hospitals will be paid the rates that are applicable at government hospitals," said Harsh Gupta, Principal Secretary (Health).

The decision was taken also considering the shortage of beds in government facilities.

According to an estimate, Bengaluru has close to 10,000 beds at government facilities, at least 3,000 fewer than stipulated by the Indian Public Health Standards. On the other hand, there are close to 22,000 beds at private healthcare facilities.

"Adding beds and creating new government health facilities takes time. We are working on building new facilities and adding beds at the existing ones. However, all of these take years to be completed. Hence, as an immediate solution, we have come up with this programme," Gupta added.

Based on the success of the pilot programme at four hospitals, the department will extend it to all private medical college hospitals in the city and further across the state, depending on the requirement.

Kannada TV actress 'filmed' inside washroom; blackmailed for money

BENGALURU, DHNS: A Kannada TV actress was allegedly videotaped while inside a washroom, and later blackmailed by an unidentified individual, said police officials on Tuesday.

According to the police, the incident occurred when the 32-year-old victim was attending an event at Koramangala Indoor Stadium on February 7.

"She went to use the women's restroom located inside the stadium. Without her knowledge, an unidentified person secretly recorded an obscene and indecent video of the complainant while she was inside the restroom," the FIR noted.

Later, the video was sent from an Instagram account named to the complainant's friend Amrutha, to her Instagram account, the police said.

"The unidentified person contacting and sending the messages to my friend Amrutha under the mistaken belief that the instagram account belongs to me, has increased my mental distress and harmed my reputation", the actress stated in complaint.

The complainant said that she was blackmailed for money and was threatened that the videos would be leaked. A case has been registered by Cyber Crime Police Station.

Avenues

IKON GROUP OF INSTITUTIONS
APPOINTMENT
is looking for a person to be appointed as administrator to look into day-to-day administration of its education institutions in and around Bengaluru.
Any person with good academic vision or any retired IAS, KAS, Defense Personal can apply
Email ID:
ikongroupofinstitutions@gmail.com

ISME Bangalore INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE
BBA / B Com /BCA/ MCA / PGDM / Ph.D.
(Ranked 30th all India by TOI)
A Leading Business School requires the following :
MANAGER / SR. MANAGER PLACEMENTS
Minimum of 5+ years of experience in Business development with excellent Communication & Networking skills. Having worked with HR Recruitment consultancy or Placements with education institute preferred.
MANAGER / SR. MANAGER ADMISSIONS
Minimum of 5+ yrs of experience in Business development and excellent Communication skills. Experience with educational institute or admission consultancy preferred.
Candidates from Bangalore staying in and around 15 km. radius or willing to shift near the campus only need to apply. Faculty with SC/ST background and residing in Karnataka are encouraged to apply.
Interested candidates may apply to hr@isme.in
ISME, Sarjapur Road, Bengaluru | 080-28019800 | www.isme.in

DH Avenues
Your invaluable career companion
For recruitment ads space booking Contact : 9148150850

RV UNIVERSITY
Go, change the world
an initiative of RV EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
We are Hiring
MYSURU Campus
Leadership & Administrative Positions
NEW-AGE GLOBAL UNIVERSITY FOR LIBERAL EDUCATION
Dean / Associate Dean
Psychology & Behavioural Sciences | Pure & Applied Sciences | Engineering
With 15+ years' (Dean) / 8+ years' (Associate Dean) post Ph.D. academic experience and strong administrative abilities.
Deputy Registrar – Compliance / Liaisoning
Master's/Law degree with minimum 8 years' university experience in compliances/Liaisoning / Registrar's office.
Joining: May – July 2026
Faculty Positions
Psychology & Behavioural Sciences | Pure & Applied Sciences | Engineering | Management
Ph.D. preferable. Teaching experience preferred. CA/CS/CWA desirable for School of Management.
Deputy Finance Officer / Manager
CA/CWA/CS withquality experience, SAP proficiency preferred.
Graphic Designer
2–5 years of relevant experience with a strong design portfolio. Proficient in Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign, and Adobe Creative Suite.
To apply visit
www.rvu.edu.in/careers
(Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted)
City office: RVU Mysuru, Admissions Office, Brigade Point, 3rd Floor, Gokulam Road, VV Mohalla, Mysuru-570002

RASHTROTTHANA PARISHAT
RASHTROTTHANA VIDYA KENDRA
(A Group of CBSE Schools - Karnataka)
Keshava Shilpa, Kempegowda Nagar, Bengaluru-560004. www.sahityabooks.com
#Rashtrotthana60
#ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೋತ್ಥಾನ60
REQUIREMENT - Academic Year 2026 - 27
Rashtrotthana Parishat is a registered society started in the year 1965 running CBSE schools in Bengaluru and across Karnataka. As part of our expansion programme, we invite applications from dynamic and committed professionals for the following positions:
Positions:

1	Principal – Location: Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra - Thanisandra, Electronic city & Haveri, Eligibility: Postgraduate with B.Ed., 10+ years of teaching, and 5+ years as Principal in a CBSE school are preferred
2	Administrator - Location: Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra – Haveri. Eligibility: B. Com/BBM/BBA/MBA/M. Com with 5+ years' experience in school administration and strong operational skills.
3	PGT: Physics, Chemistry, Math, Biology, Computer Science, Eligibility: PG in relevant subject with B.Ed., Preference to experienced faculty who can train students for KCET / COMED-K / IIT-JEE / NEET.
4	TGT: English, Kannada, Hindi, Sanskrit, Math, Science, Social Science, Computer Science Eligibility: Postgraduate/Graduate in relevant subject with B.Ed.
5	PRT: English, Kannada, Hindi, Sanskrit, Math, Science, Social Science, Computer Science Eligibility: Graduate in relevant subject with B.Ed./D.Ed.
6	PPT: Kindergarten / Montessori Teachers – NTT / Montessori Diploma
7	PET: M.P.Ed./B.P.Ed. Ladies preferred
8	Performing Arts: Theater, Karate, Dance, Yoga, Vocal Music, Tabla, Keyboard – Relevant Certificate with experience
9	Visual Art: B.F.A./B.V.A.
10	Swimming Coach & Life Guard: Location: Bengaluru Schools, Certificate in relevant area, Lady Coach preferred
11	Computer Instructor: BCA/MCA
12	Librarian: M.L.I.Sc./B.L.I.Sc.
13	Counsellor: M.Sc. in Child & Adult Psychology
14	Special Educator: Certificate from Rehabilitation Council of India
15	Wellness Staff (Staff Nurse): Diploma in Nursing

Remuneration will not be a constraint for deserving candidates.
Immediate joiners will be given preference.
Apply to the respective school email IDs:

SN	School & Location	Email ID	SN	School & Location	Email ID
1	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Thanisandra main road, Arkavathy Layout, Bengaluru	hr.arkbng@rvkcbse.in	10	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Srinagar, Mysuru	hr.srimys@rvkcbse.in
			11	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Vijayanagar, Mysuru	hr.vijmys@rvkcbse.in
2	Jaigopal Garodia Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Ramamurthy Nagar, Bengaluru	hr.rmnbng@rvkcbse.in	12	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Sattur, Dharwad	hr.strdwd@rvkcbse.in
3	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Banashankari, Bengaluru	hr.bskbng@rvkcbse.in	13	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Kalaburagi	hr.klbg@rvkcbse.in
4	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Somanahalli, Bengaluru	hr.sombng@rvkcbse.in	14	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Mangaluru	hr.mang@rvkcbse.in
5	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Hurulichikkanahalli, Hesaraghatta, Yelahanka road, Bengaluru	hr.hurulibng@rvkcbse.in	15	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Kerur, Bagalkot	hr.kerurbgkt@rvkcbse.in
			16	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Ballari	hr.blri@rvkcbse.in
6	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Hulimangala, Electronic City, Bengaluru	hr.ecitybng@rvkcbse.in	17	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Hangal	hr.hangalhvr@rvkcbse.in
7	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Garag, Dharwad	hr.dwd@rvkcbse.in	18	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Hassan	hr.hassan@rvkcbse.in
8	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Davangere	hr.dvg@rvkcbse.in	19	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Udupi	hr.udupi@rvkcbse.in
9	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Hagaribomanahalli	hr.hbhvij@rvkcbse.in	20	Rashtrotthana Vidya Kendra Haveri	hr.haveri@rvkcbse.in

Join us in nurturing young minds and shaping future leaders.

KLE ACADEMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, BELAGAVI, KARNATAKA
(Deemed-to-be-University established u/s 3 & 12B of the UGC Act, 1956)
Accredited with A+ Grade by NAAC (3rd Cycle) Placed in Category 'A' by MoE(GoI)
FACULTY RECRUITMENT
Applications are invited from eligible and qualified candidates for the following post @
PRINCIPAL
• JAGADGURU GANGADHAR MAHASWAMIGALU MOORUSAVIRMATH MEDICAL COLLEGE, HUBBALLI
• KLE VISHWANATH KATTI INSTITUTE OF DENTAL SCIENCES, BELAGAVI
• KLE COLLEGE OF PHARMACY, BELAGAVI
• PROFESSOR • READER • ASSISTANT PROFESSOR • ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR • SENIOR RESIDENT • TUTOR
• JAWAHARLAL NEHRU MEDICAL COLLEGE, BELAGAVI • J G M MEDICAL COLLEGE, HUBBALLI
• KLE COLLEGE OF PHARMACY BELAGAVI, BENGALURU & HUBBALLI
• KLE SHRI. B. M. KANKANWADI AYURVEDA MAHAVIDYALAYA, BELAGAVI
• KLE INSTITUTE OF PHYSIOTHERAPY, BELAGAVI • KLE HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICAL COLLEGE, BELAGAVI
KLE HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL, BELAGAVI
• GENERAL PHYSICIAN • GENERAL SURGEON • OBSTETRICIAN & GYNAECOLOGIST
• RADIOLOGIST • PATHOLOGIST • BIOCHEMIST • LABORATORY TECHNICIAN
• X-RAY TECHNICIAN OR RADIOGRAPHER • NURSING STAFF
KLE INSTITUTE OF PHYSIOTHERAPY, BELAGAVI
• DEAN/PRINCIPAL (OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY)
• CLINICAL OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST • SENIOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST
• SUPERINTENDENT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY • CHIEF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST
• DIRECTOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST • ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL • DEMONSTRATOR
KLE SCHOOL OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES, BELAGAVI
• PROFESSOR • ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR • ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
• LECTURER/SENIOR RESIDENT • CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR TUTOR / DEMONSTRATOR
FOR THE COURSES
• BACHELOR OF OPTOMETRY • BACHELOR OF MEDICAL IMAGING TECHNOLOGY
• BACHELOR OF RESPIRATORY TECHNOLOGY • BACHELOR OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIST
• BACHELOR OF ANAESTHESIA & OPERATION THEATRE TECHNOLOGY
• BACHELOR OF DIALYSIS TECHNOLOGY & THERAPY • BACHELOR OF RADIATION THERAPY TECHNOLOGY
KLE ACADEMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, BELAGAVI
• VIDEOGRAPHER/ PHOTOGRAPHER • BIOMEDICAL ENGINEER
Salary commensurate with qualification and experience and as per KAHER norms.
• Short listed candidates shall be called for the interviews.
• Last date for submission of applications: 28/02/2026.
Scan QR for more info
For further details & application form, log on to our website/ Scan QR
www.kaher.edu.in 0831- 2444 444
Date: 18/02/2026
Sd/- Registrar

City groups that are advocating for better footpaths

They promote walking, conduct footpath audits, and report concerns to the authorities

TINI SARA ANIEN
TEAM METROLIFE

A viral video of an elderly woman in Kerala stopping a biker from riding on a footpath has sparked conversations about pedestrian rights and safety. In Bengaluru, too, some individuals and groups are working to ensure that footpaths are accessible, clean, and properly designed.

Flag and fix

Walkaluru has been organising walks to assess how pedestrian-friendly our city footpaths are, and flag key issues. These 'footpath walks' bring together citizens, corporation commissioners, MLAs, and representatives from RWAs. Ten walks have been conducted since November, covering nearly 100 km and involving 1,000 citizens.

Arun Pai, coordinator of Walkaluru, says they identify 10-15 km of footpaths to survey with the help of ward committees and engineers. Wherever possible, minor issues are fixed before citizens are invited to assess the stretch.

Pai encourages residents to do their bit and approach local engineers to get repairs done. All civic grievances can be reported through channels such as the Sahaaya app.

For upcoming walks, look up @walkaluru on Instagram.

New audit from Friday

In 2023, Sensing Local, a research organisation, conducted a walkability audit to document footpath conditions across 19 wards, including Koramangala, J P Nagar, Basavangudi and Amrutahalli. The findings were submitted to the civic administration but did not lead to action immediately due to limited city budgets, says cofounder Ankit Bhargava. "In 2025, the data was used to create city budgets to factor in improvement of footpaths and junctions," he says. These audits have now received support from GBA. The team along with the World Resources Institute India is profiling approximately 1,500 km of arterial and sub-arterial roads to build a centralised database to help identify streets that need urgent improvement.

"Profiling helps to identify whether a footpath exists, and if it does, we document its width, height and the materials used," Bhargava explains.

The profiling effort will begin this Friday and continue until April. The team is looking to partner with educational institutions for the exercise.

Contact info@sensinglocal.in to participate.

Small wins

Social activist Aniruddha Jatkar identifies footpath problems and escalates them to the authorities. He also takes up issues brought to his attention by citizens.

Through his campaign #Swacchathegaginanusahabhagi, he highlights footpaths that are littered, poorly maintained, unscientifically constructed or encroached upon. "While litter often gets cleared within hours, redesigning footpaths takes time and requires government involvement," he says.

He has previously flagged garbage dumping on pavements in areas such as Jayanagar, Basaveshwaranagar and Peenya, which were later cleared. He has now raised concerns about garbage dumping near the Banashankari temple and vendor encroachments at Sarakki Circle, and is awaiting action.

Citizens can share details of footpath concerns with him on Instagram at @aniruddhajatkar.

Last month, around 300 people joined a 26-km footpath walk, organised by Walkaluru. They walked from Jayanagar to Yeshwanthpur.

POPCORN

Bhag Macron...

So Macron went jogging along the Marine Drive in Mumbai. In the process, the French president unwittingly reminded Bengalureans about something from the distant past. Footpaths. Out here, if he had set out for a jog, he would have ended up doing a triathlon. We have shops, gardens, ditches and other extreme hurdles in place of footpaths. And in some cases, he would have run into people high and mighty taking pride in spaces citizens a long time ago once used for their morning jogs. Of course a risk was that he could have tripped any moment. Jog falls — famous in these parts.

Counsellors: Obsession often a coping mechanism

The Ghaziabad tragedy highlights how oversimplifying distress can misrepresent deeper mental health struggles

SHRADDHA A K
TEAM METROLIFE

The recent triple suicide in Ghaziabad has sparked widespread debate — but mental health professionals warn that reducing the tragedy to a "K-pop obsession" is an oversimplification of the deeper, more complex reality. The three sisters, aged between 12 and 16, jumped from the ninth floor of their housing complex after their phones were confiscated. Their diaries reportedly mentioned frustration over being barred from engaging with K-pop and K-dramas.

Sources suggest the sisters were not attending school and lived in a household burdened by debt and isolation. Experts believe their engagement with Korean entertainment may have functioned as a coping mechanism.

Metrolife spoke to experts about distinguishing between genuine mental health concerns and coping behaviours that may appear excessive.

Interest vs obsession

Dr Safiya M S, a psychiatrist, says that the term "obsession" is often misused. "If someone engages in something minimally, it's an interest. Only when it becomes dysfunctional does it qualify as an obsession," she says. Nithya J Rao, a rehabilitation psychologist, says the object of fixation is secondary. "If a 12-year-old is unhealthily absorbed in anything, we must ask why. If they're heavily invested in one avenue, they're likely coping with something distressing." Counsellor Sunil Fernandes, with 35 years of experience, echoes this view. "Once labelled, a child may start seeing themselves only through that tag."

Experts say there is an urgent need for a formal child protection system that conducts proactive wellness checks on them. PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

Spotting red flags

Dr Safiya says inability to interact with peers, being away from school for extended periods, and neglect of hygiene are warning signs. "If kids are absent from school for long periods, schools should inform authorities," she says. Nithya suggests behavioural shifts as early indicators. "The easiest sign is sleep. That's the first thing that changes. If behaviour drastically shifts in a short period, that's a warning."

HOW MENTAL ILLNESS IN KIDS IS OFTEN MISLABELLED

- Inability to get out of bed — labelled as laziness.
- Irritability — mistaken as arrogance.
- Refusing to go to school — seen as aggression rather than distress.
- If you or someone you know is struggling, seek professional help or contact helplines such as Tele MANAS (1800 891 4416).

Loneliness and isolation

Chronic loneliness affects neuroplasticity and executive functioning, says Dr Safiya. "Self-confidence, emotional growth and the ability to develop mentally are deeply impacted," she explains.

The Ghaziabad sisters had reportedly not attended school for 2-3 years and were largely isolated, as the father could not afford to send them to school while in debt. The girls were deeply involved in a "Korean task-based game". They used Korean names to create a social media account with a large following. Investigations revealed a complex, strained household, with their father allegedly married to three women (who are sisters) and having multiple children.

Nithya adds that prolonged isolation can hinder identity formation. "They may grow into people pleasers with impulsivity and poor emotional regulation," she says.

Sunil notes that children in restrictive homes often don't realise support systems exist. "A child may appear socially brilliant outside but feel bitter and unsupported within. Isolation can turn into resentment and emotional damage in adulthood."

Toxic households

Nithya stresses the need for structural intervention. She says, "Unless a child is removed from a toxic environment, prevention is difficult. In India, parents largely control access. That's a community lapse." Dr Safiya adds that children raised in such environments often feel helpless and abandoned.

"They are at higher risk of self-harm because they constantly seek validation," she says.

All experts agree on the urgent need for a formal child protection system that conducts proactive wellness checks, rather than acting only after a crime. Currently, interventions often occur post-incident, leaving vulnerable children without preventive support.

'Pre-marital sex is normal, but stay cautious'

Therapists weigh in on the topic that has been in the news lately

RASHMI RAJAGOPAL
TEAM METROLIFE

In the 2015 film, 'Ok Kanmani' actors Dulquer Salmaan and Nithya Menen play a couple in a live-in relationship.

The topic of whether or not pre-marital sex is acceptable in Indian society has reared its head again. Social media is abuzz with observations on the topic, which has been in the news of late.

City-based relationship counsellors and sex therapists note that in reality, sex before marriage is normalised, especially in cities. Sunil John, a relationship counsellor with over 15 years of experience, says, "What I have observed with my clients is that, in almost all relationships across all age groups, sex is a given. My clients who are in relationships and do not indulge in sex are probably in single digits." He adds that it has become increasingly common in the last 10-15 years.

After age 18, it is healthy to explore one's sexuality, provided it is consensual and not a mere 'body count'. A Gen Z term for the number of people one has slept with, 'body count' is a disturbing trend, he notes.

"The higher one's body count, the higher their value," John says, of a term that peaked in 2020, driven by social media platforms. "It has been proven through many studies that the higher the number of people one has sex with, the more difficult it is to maintain a healthy relationship when one wants to settle down," he explains.

Another disturbing trend he has seen is an increase in school children indulging in sexual activity. He warns that before the age of 18, teens are not mentally or physically equipped to handle sex. "Parents have brought in their teenage kids after they were found having physical relations with the opposite sex," he reveals. In a recent case, a high school girl was found in her boyfriend's apartment one morning. "She had snuck out at night to spend the night with the boy and they had fallen asleep, only to be found together in the morning by the boy's parents".

Counsellor Maullika Sharma notes that while it is normalised, in her experience, women are more emotionally damaged than men when such relationships end.

Gynaecologists and sex therapists, however, urge caution before proceeding with physical intimacy. Dr Hemavathi Srinivasan, a gynecologist practicing near several colleges, says she has seen a 20-30% rise over the past decade in young unmarried women seeking care for issues like vaginal discharge and itching, sometimes linked to sexual activity. She emphasises that a doctor's role is to focus on health, and not judge. "We cannot assume that youngsters will abstain, so the priority should be education on safe sex and responsible behaviour," she says.

She strongly advises consistent use of protection and recommends HPV vaccination — ideally between ages 9 and 14, with catch-up vaccination up to age 26 — as an essential step in preventing cervical cancer and other HPV-related diseases.

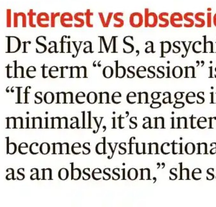
According to Dr Sandip Deshpande, a sexologist, it comes down to personal choice. "We get couples who come to us because they want to be celibate until marriage. Or who are okay with outer course, but want to avoid intercourse until things are official," he explains.

Amadeus: Sajnani play returns after two decades

Arjun Sajnani is bringing 'Amadeus', Peter Shaffer's acclaimed play on Mozart, back to Bengaluru after more than two decades. He first directed it in 1982, after which it had a short run in cities like Mumbai, Kolkata and Bengaluru.

'Amadeus' is a fictitious examination of the "unending and fatal rivalry" between Mozart, regarded as one of the most prolific composers in Western music history, and his contemporary, Antonio Salieri. In the play, Salieri resents that Mozart is the "chosen one" among musicians, whose genius he had recognised before the world did.

Sajnani says the script, music and emotions are timeless, which is why he wanted to revive it for a new generation. He believes "a part of living and learning is discovering new things", and each time he revisits the script, he uncovers new emotional depths.



A still from the rehearsals.

When it premiered, the production featured a minimal stage setting. In the current version, visual technology has been used to "transport audiences to Vienna and to Salieri's residence". Mozart's music features in the play as snippets and is used "judiciously" to evoke a wide range of emotions. Some choral and operatic pieces are also explored. "There will be enough music to whet people's appetite to learn more about Mozart and Western classical music," he says.

On February 21, 7 pm, and February 22, 5 pm, at Prestige Centre for Performing Arts, Konanakunte. Tickets online.

Festival to mark 50 years of 6 theatre troupes

Six prominent theatre troupes — Rangasampada, Samudaya, Kala Gangotri, Spandana, Nataranga and Benaka — will celebrate over 50 years of their contribution to Kannada theatre. They will stage six plays at the Honnaru Rangotsava theatre festival, which begins on Saturday.

Established in the 1970s, these groups have made groundbreaking plays like 'Tughlaq' (Nataranga), 'Belchi' (Samudaya), 'Lakshapathi Rajana Kathe' (Spandana), 'Pampa Bharatha' (Samudaya), 'Sattavara Neralu' (Benaka), 'Mukhyamantri' (Kala Gangotri) and 'Odalala' (Rangasampada), among others. On the first day of the festival, Rangasampada will present 'Sharmishte', a one-woman play featuring noted actor and politician Umashree. The play is written by Belur Raghunandan and directed by P Chidambara Rao Jambe.

Umashree in 'Sharmishte'.

On the following days, Samudaya will stage 'Bhagavantana Saavu', an adaptation of K R Meera's Malayalam story, directed by Samkutty Pattomkary, and Nataranga will present K Y Narayanaswamy's 'Neeragannadi', directed by B Suresha. Kala Gangotri will stage Harish Athreya's 'Moneye Devaru', directed by B V Rajaram, while Spandana will perform H S Venkateshmurthy's 'Hagalu Kanasu', directed by B Jayashree. The festival will conclude with Benaka presenting B V Karanth's 'Jokumaraswamy', directed by T S Nagabharana.

The event is being organised by noted theatre personality Srinivas G Kappanna, with Umashree serving as advisor. According to a press statement, it is being held without any government funding or support from any academy.

From February 21 to 26, 6.30 pm, at Ravindra Kalakshetra, J C Road. Tickets online.

EVENTS

Music festival
Parveen Sultana, Purbayan Chatterjee, Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Thiruvaarur Bakthavathsalam and other eminent artistes will perform at 'Udupa Music Festival' from February 20 to 22, at Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Vyalikaval. The festival is an initiative of ghatam player Giridhar Udupa. Call 78998 82200 for details. Tickets online.

Film screening
'Cinema Pe Cinema', a film on the dwindling single-screen theatres in India, will be screened on February 18, 6.30 pm, at Bangalore International Centre, Domlur. Entry free. RSVP to bangaloreinternationalcentre.org.

Social drama
'Varna Pallata', a satirical play in Kannada on inequalities in Indian society, will be staged on February 19, 7.30 pm, at Ranga Shankara, J P Nagar. Tickets online.

Dancing professors go viral, win hearts

They have earned praise for redefining the image of teachers beyond classroom lectures

BARKHA KUMARI
TEAM METROLIFE

A video of a female teacher grooving energetically to Prabhu Deva's iconic 'Muqabala' is going viral on social media. Some reports suggest it was shot at a college function in Kerala. In recent months, two college professors from Bengaluru have also won praise online for their dancing talent. *Metrolife* speaks to them.

Classical twist to 'Apsara aali'

It was an ordinary day at work when Shiva Kumar N, an arts lecturer at Acharya School of Design, Soladevanahalli, was approached by the college's video team to feature in a dance reel. Neither had he heard 'Apsara aali', the popular Lavani song, nor did he know its dance steps. In five minutes, he put together a choreography inspired by Indian classical dance and joined a group of female students for the reel.

Shiva Kumar N draws inspiration from Indian classical dance forms.

Shot a month ago, the 30-second video has since gone viral, earning the 45-year-old the affectionate titles of 'Cool Professor' and 'Dancing Professor'. "Some even thought it was an AI-generated video!" he says.

Though not formally trained, Kumar is known on campus for never missing a chance to dance. "My body just starts moving when I hear music," he says.

He has danced on buses, at weddings, in competitions, and once even on the roadside outside the college to draw attention to a design week his team was hosting. He is especially drawn to Indian classical dance for its "mudras and bhavas", and insists he can dance to any song, "even a sad one".

Kumar was passionate about dancing and singing since childhood. And in a faculty talent competition in 2023, he won first place in both singing and dancing. However, he never pursued them professionally because he did not know "they were real careers". Apart from a few relatives who feel embarrassed about "the old man dancing", Kumar has received a great deal of encouragement. "I dance because it makes me feel alive," he says.

'Moves like Prabhu Deva'

Pushparaj H, assistant professor of electrical and electronics engineering at Global Academy of Technology, R R Nagar, also found fame after an impromptu performance.

Pushparaj H often dances to popular Prabhu Deva and Michael Jackson numbers.

During a cultural fest at his college last August, chief guests, faculty members and students urged him to dance to 'Muqabala'. He recreated Prabhu Deva's signature hook steps (think punching down and sliding footwork) amid loud cheers. The video has since clocked 15 million views.

However, he says it wasn't his first viral moment. His earlier performances of 'Naatu Naatu' and 'Dangerous' had garnered 25 million and 39.8 million views, respectively.

A native of Ballari, Pushparaj is largely self-taught and had a brief stint teaching at a dance academy in Mysuru. "While teaching there, I also picked up hip-hop styles like krumping," he recalls.

He was six when his teachers selected him for a dance show at school. "I had to dance to 'Tu cheez badi hai mast mast'. I played the girl's part. It was a boys' school," he says with a laugh. In the years that followed, he would mimic the moves of Michael Jackson, Prabhu Deva, Hrithik Roshan and NTR Jr at home.

The 37-year-old is glad students are now seeing a different side of their professors. Earlier, faculty members often held themselves back in the name of decorum, he says. Today, he is known as the "Prabhu Deva of the college".

India's largest mega coaching terminal planned in Yelahanka

New hub will decongest Bengaluru stations: Somanna

BENGALURU, DHNS

India's largest mega coaching terminal has been planned in northern Bengaluru's Yelahanka at a cost of Rs 5,754 crore, Minister of State for Railways V Somanna said on Tuesday.

The terminal is proposed to be built next to the Rail Wheel Factory (RWF) and its Final Location Survey (FLS) has been completed, he added.

He was speaking to reporters after flagging off the experimental stoppage of four trains at Nayandahalli and inaugurating a railway overbridge in Vijayanagar, both in western Bengaluru.

The South Western Railway (SWR) had initially proposed the terminal — the city's fifth — in Devanahalli, about 15 km from the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA). However, a meeting held on June 5, 2025, decided that Devanahalli was unsuitable due to its distance from the city and other factors.

In August, then SWR General Manager Mukul Saran Mathur had told *DH* that a new terminal and/or maintenance facility was being explored in Yelahanka. Two conceptual plans — one involving complete relocation of the RWF and another retaining it — had been prepared, he had added.

An FLS for Rs 1.35 crore was conducted to finalise the exact location of the terminal anywhere on the Yelahanka-Devanahalli-Chikkaballapur line.

The SWR is now conducting a feasibility study, which will be followed by a Detailed Project Report (DPR), a senior SWR official said.

The terminal is expected to have 16 platforms, 12 pit lines and 24 stabling lines among other facilities.

The new rail overbridge, inaugurated by Minister of State for Railways V Somanna on Tuesday, will connect Vijayanagar and Mysuru Road in Bengaluru. PHOTO: SWR

This will be the second modern terminal for Bengaluru. The first — SMVT Bengaluru — is already operational, and handles 50 trains bound for East and Northeast India.

In 2024–25, Bengaluru served 212.06 million railway passengers, including 103.72 million originating passengers.

A total of 210 trains are expected to originate from the city in the near future, and the existing terminals will prove inadequate to handle them.

Bengaluru's railway network faces multiple operational bottlenecks — fully utilised pit lines, overcrowded platforms, frequent train delays, high empty rake movements due to insufficient stabling lines and no dedicated goods corridor. Urban density has made expansion at existing sites nearly impossible, according to the SWR.

At the press conference, Somanna also announced that the masterplan for the Rs 1,370-crore redevelopment of KSR Bengaluru — the city's largest railway station — was ready and would be sent to the cabinet for approval.

The railways has also completed the DPR for quadrupling the tracks between Bengaluru and Tumakuru, and will conduct a survey for building a direct line from Whitefield to Kolar, he added.

Speaking about the new railway overbridge (number 431) between Vijayanagar and Padarayanapura constructed at a cost of Rs 14.1 crore, Somanna said it would benefit a large number of people from Goripalya, Vijayanagar and the surrounding areas.

The ROB consists of a 1 x 42 m bowstring girder with an approach length of 86 metres on the Mysuru Road side and 110 metres on the Vijayanagar side, according to the SWR.

Somanna said that the railways planned to eliminate another 108 level-crossings in Bengaluru by constructing road underbridges and overbridges.

Modi, Macron launch Kolar H125...

Macron, From Page 1

While Modi met Macron in Mumbai, Rajnath Singh held discussions with his French counterpart Catherine Vautrine in Bengaluru. Macron will travel to Delhi to attend the ongoing AI impact summit.

At the 6th India-France Annual Defence Dialogue in Bengaluru, the two ministers discussed bilateral security and defence issues, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

They emphasised the need for a closer defence partnership and connecting the industries of both nations, especially in the field of niche technology, besides reaffirming their commitment to enhancing military-to-military cooperation as a key pillar of the strategic partnership.

While Rajnath flagged the importance of the recent India-EU Security & Defence Partnership as a significant step in deepening the collective engagement, the two ministers agreed to leverage this framework, both bilaterally and in the wider European context.

Welcoming Vautrin in her maiden visit to India, Rajnath said her tenure comes at a critical moment for European and global security and India deeply appreciates France's steadfast commitment to strategic autonomy and a robust European defence posture.

The French Defence Minister appreciated the conversion of Exercise Shakti with the Army from biennial to an annual event. The renewal of the 10-year defence cooperation agreement was signed by the Defence Secretary from the Indian side and Deputy Director General for International Relations and Strategy from the French side.

The MoU on a joint venture for the manufacturing of Hammer missiles in India was signed by the chairman-cum-managing director of Bharat Electronics Ltd and executive vice president, Safran Electronics and Defence.

India inks critical mineral pacts with France

France, From Page 1

"We are going to launch the Indo-French Centre for AI in Health, the Indo-French Centre for Digital Science and Technology, and a National Centre of Excellence for Skilling in Aeronautics. And these are not merely institutions — they are platforms for building the future," Modi added.

The other outcomes of the meeting between the two leaders included the constitution of a Joint Advanced Technology Development Group, a letter of intent between T-Hub and Nord France on strategic cooperation in start-up ecosystems, innovation and technology, an MoU for scientific collaboration between DST and CNRS, a joint declaration of intent on establishing an Indo-French Centre for Digital Sciences and Technology, a letter of intent between Department of Biotechnology of India and ANRS Emerging Infectious Diseases of France and an agreement for the establishment of Indo-French Centre for Metabolic Health Sciences.

"To promote mutual investment, we are signing an agreement to avoid double taxation for our people and companies," Modi said after meeting Macron.

"These initiatives will energise trade, investment and mobility — and form the roadmap for shared prosperity."

Macron said the India-France relationship was progressing rapidly. "We have also discussed the transit visa requirement for visiting France, and we will study how to eliminate it... France and India are two countries that have much to offer the world."

Farmers seek resolution against India-US trade pact

BENGALURU, DHNS: The farmers' associations in Karnataka on Tuesday urged the state government to pass a resolution in the state legislature opposing the Indo-US interim trade agreement stating lower or zero tariff on US produces would be detrimental to the farmers in India.

They also flagged concerns over Karnataka being second in the country in farmer suicides and sought revival of a Kisan Samman-type scheme with Rs 10,000 assistance to farmers, as part of their charter of demands before Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at the pre-budget consultation meeting held in Bengaluru.

India to attract over Rs 18L cr...

AI, From Page 1

With many new plug-ins and AI tools coming in, there have been debates on the future of the IT services industry, and the minister said the industry is one of the biggest strengths and that the transition must be managed jointly by industry, academia and government.

He also highlighted the need for reskilling and upskilling the existing workforce.

Vaishnaw also announced that the country will scale its compute capacity beyond the existing 38,000 GPUs (Graphics Processing Units) with the addition of 20,000 GPUs in the coming weeks.

On the Semiconductor Mission, the minister said design will be the primary focus in Semiconductor 2.0.

"We do believe that at least 50 deep-tech startups will emerge from our country in the coming years because of the efforts and innovation that are taking place here.

Addressing sustainability, Vaishnaw stressed investments in clean energy to power AI data centres and ongoing research to reduce power and water consumption.

Emerging innovations indicate the potential to reduce AI infrastructure energy use by up to 35%.

Also, several sovereign AI models by India have been tested and measured against multiple parameters.

The minister said compared with global models, several Indian models have been rated better than many large international AI systems.

Slow traffic: Cops counter TomTom survey numbers

Traffic, From Page 1

While the travel time has increased year-on-year, BTP officials said that interventions by various departments had helped restrict the rise.

Both the analysis by BTP and the TomTom Index showed that the traffic congestion had come down significantly after July 2025, owing to these interventions.

Senior government officials said that the intervention by Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had pushed the officials from various departments to take necessary action to improve roads and in turn, reduce congestion.

"There were many road works that also obstructed the traffic flow. Apart from that, the potholes and poor road conditions also led to traffic snarls. However, after the CM and DCM intervened, the situation has improved," a senior official said. Better synchronisation of signals on major corridors during the peak hours, metro expansion, improvement of road quality, faster clearance in case of breakdown of vehicles, continuous monitoring, and predictive analytics have helped restrict travel time, the officials said.

Senior officials said that they were not denying congestion in the city, but there was a need to look at it from an overall perspective.

While global indices indicate the presence of congestion, local, ground-validated data show that the city has prevented a demand-driven collapse, the officials added.

Traffic experts opined that there is a need to implement more measures on ground rather than talking about statistics.

"The measurement techniques may be different and hence the travel time may vary. But rather than disputing about the travel time, it is important to focus on implementing measures. The traffic police should ensure haphazard roadside parking is stopped since this is one of the major reasons for traffic build up. Simple measures can go a long way in improving the situation in ground," said Prof M N Sreehari, traffic expert.

Government of Karnataka
Minor Irrigation & Ground Water Development Department
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION & GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DIVISION BIDAR
bdr_eemi @yahoo.com eemibidar@gmail.com Phone/Fax: 08482 232080

No EE/MI&GWD/BDR/TS-1&2/Tender/2025-26/ **307** Date: 16-2-2026

KPP -Procurement Tender Details

1) Name of Works: As mentioned in KPP-Portal, 2 Estimate cost of Work: As mentioned in KPP-Portal, 3) Eligibility of Contractor: As mentioned in KPP - Portal, 4) Amount put to tender: As mentioned in KPP-Portal, 5) Cost of tender form & Details of EMD: As mentioned in KPP-Portal, 6) Last date & time for tender queries/clarifications KW-1,KW-2 & KW-3 Only:**19-02-2026 Up to 17-00 Hours,** 7) Last Date & Time for receipt of KW-1, KW-2 & KW-3 Only : **23-02-2026 Up to 16.00 Hours,** 8) Date & time for opening Technical bid KW-1, KW-2 & KW-3 Only: **25-02-2026 @ 11.00 Hours if possible,** 9) Date & time for opening financial bid KW-1, KW-2 & KW-3 Only: **27-02-2026 @ 11.00 Hours if possible,** 10) For any clarification and details, office to be contacted Executive Engineer, MI & GWD Division Bidar Phone/ Fax:08482 232080, 11) Website details : KPP portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- Executive Engineer
MI & GWD Division, Bidar

DIPR/Bidar/336/KSMC&A/2025-26

ಡಾ. ಮನಮೋಹನ್ ಸಿಂಗ್
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ
Dr. MANMOHAN SINGH BENGALURU CITY UNIVERSITY
ಆಗು ನೀ ಅನಿಕೇತನ
BE BOUNDLESS
Office of the Registrar Evaluation, Jnana Jyothi Central College Campus, Dr Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru – 560001. Ph: 080-22295559/29572003 | Mail: registrarevlubcu@gmail.com/regev@bcu.ac.in

No:BCU/Ex.Br./5th Annual Conv./2025-26/616 **Date:17.02.2026**

PRESS RELEASE

The 5th Annual Convocation of Dr Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University is proposed to be held during 1st or 2nd week of April 2026 to award Degree to the students who have completed their Undergraduate & Postgraduate Examinations held up to November / December - 2025 from the various PG Department, Affiliated Colleges & Autonomous Colleges. The Candidates who have not applied for the award of Degree Certificate and passed the Undergraduate & Postgraduate Examinations held up to November / December -2025 may submit their applications on or before 13.03.2026. The details are as follows:

Sl No.	Particulars	Date
1.	Last Date for Submission of duly filled in application to the PG. Department/College without fine up to.	09.03.2026
2.	Last Date for Submission of duly filled in application to the PG. Department/College with penalty fee of Rs.100/-.	13.03.2026
3.	Last Date for submitting the Convocation Applications to the Registrar (Evaluation), Dr. MSBCU along with Online fee receipt in a statement format.	18.03.2026

Eligible candidates may submit online application by visiting the University website www.bcu.ac.in & login to **uucms.karnataka.gov.in,** after submitting the online application, students are required to get printout of the application and submit the same to their Head of the Department of PG Departments / Principals of concerned colleges. Those who have paid the convocation fee during their final semester examination, need not to pay convocation fee again. Candidates who have completed their course and not applied for Convocation Degree Certificate earlier may submit their application along with prescribed fee.

Detailed information and the notification are available in the University website **https://www.bcu.ac.in/**

Sd/-
REGISTRAR (EVALUATION)

DIPR/CP/5694/CCL/2025-26

Directorate of Medical Education
BMC&RI (Old Building), 1st Floor, Fort, K.R. Road, Bengaluru - 560002. Phone: 080-22870060 Fax: 080-22875798
E-mail: dmekarnataka@yahoo.com

No: ME/Tender/22/2025-26 Date: 17-02-2026

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Two Cover System) (Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal)

Tenders are invited for the **Purchase of Equipments, Books and Journals for Bagalakote Medical College & Research Institute, Bagalkot.** Tender Document and E.M.D., details can be viewed, downloaded & applied only through the KPP Portal. Interested tenderers have to register in the KPP Portal, details of which can be viewed in the Website: **https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Commencement date for Uploading of Tenders Dt: 19-02-2026
Pre-Bid Meeting Dt: 27-02-2026 at 11.30 AM
Last date for Uploading the Tenders Dt: 23-03-2026 before 5.00 PM
Date of Opening of Technical Bid Dt: 25-03-2026 at 11.30 AM

For further details contact **Director of Medical Education, BMC&RI (Old Building), 1st Floor, Fort, K.R. Road, Bengaluru - 560002.**

Sd/- Director
Director of Medical Education, Bengaluru.

DIPR/CP/5685/Adverto/2025-26

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN : U40109KA1999SGC025521)

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPPP mode only)

KPTCL invites Tenders for the following works

(1) SE(E)/Tr(O)C-N/EE(E)/AEE(E)-1/F-851 & T6/25-26/3711, Dt: 13.02.2026 **Tender No.: KPTCL/2025-26/IND0277** for Design, Manufacture, Testing and supply of 42 Nos. of 400-200/1-1-1 A ration 66kV Current Transformers for various sub-stations.

(2) SE(E)/Tr(O)C-N/EE(E)/AEE(E)-2/F-114(2)/25-26/3723, Dt: 16.02.2026 **Tender No.: KPTCL/2025-26/IND0220/Call-4** for Design, Manufacture, Testing and supply of Five (05) Nos. of 110 Volts, 15A Battery charger set to various sub-stations.

The Bids will be received through E Procurement mode only. The detailed notification regarding the subject tenders can be got by logging on to **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink 'E Procurement KPTCL' or to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after 18.02.2026.** Further details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Ele., Tr (Op) North- Circle, KPTCL, UAS Campus, Hebbal, Bengaluru-560 024

ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ
ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಶಿವಗಂಗೋತ್ರಿ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ–577002
ದೂ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 08192–208029 ಇ–ಮೇಲ್:registrar@davangereuniversity.ac.in

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ದಾವಿ/ಪಿಹೆಚ್‌ಡಿ/1104/2025–26/4967 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 17.02.2026

ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯದ ವಿವಿಧ ಸ್ನಾತಕೋತ್ತರ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ವಿಭಾಗಗಳಲ್ಲಿ 2025–26ನೇ ಶೈಕ್ಷಣಿಕ ಸಾಲಿಗೆ, ಲಭ್ಯವಿರುವ ಪಿಹೆಚ್.ಡಿ. ಪದವಿ ಸೀಟುಗಳಿಗೆ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಿದೆ. ಅರ್ಹ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು ತಮ್ಮ ಶೈಕ್ಷಣಿಕ ಅರ್ಹತೆಯ ದಾಖಲೆ, ಮೀಸಲಾತಿ ಹಾಗೂ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿದ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಪಾವತಿಸಿದ ರಶೀದಿಯನ್ನು ಅರ್ಜಿಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಪಟ್ಟ ಸ್ನಾತಕೋತ್ತರ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ವಿಭಾಗಕ್ಕೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು. ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಅವಧಿ ದಿನಾಂಕ:17.02.2026 ರಿಂದ ದಿನಾಂಕ:16.03.2026 ರವರೆಗೆ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಪಿಹೆಚ್.ಡಿ. ಪದವಿಯ ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ, ಅರ್ಜಿ ನಮೂನೆ, ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿದ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಕುರಿತಂತೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯದ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ www.davangereuniversity.ac.in ಗೆ ಭೇಟಿ ನೀಡತಕ್ಕದ್ದು.

ಪಾಸಾಇ/ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ/747/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

ಸಹಿ/– ಕುಲಸಚಿವರು, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ
ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ, ಶಿವಗಂಗೋತ್ರಿ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ.

KARNATAKA NEERAVARI NIGAM LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprises)
Office of the Executive Engineer, K.N.N.L.,
Shiggaon Lift Irrigation Division, K.C.D. Circle, Behind Ganapati Temple, Dasanakoppa Main Road, Dharwad - 580 001.
Phone : 0836 - 2955347, E-mail : eesliddwd@gmail.com

No. : K.N.N.L./SLID/DWD/PB-1/Shiggaon-Additional/Tender/2025-26/968 Date : 16-02-2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (2nd Call)
(Through K.P.P. Portal only)
Ref : KNN/SLID/DWD/PB-1/Savanur-Additional/Tender/2025-26/884, Dated : 21-01-2026

On behalf of the **Managing Director Karnataka Neeravari Nigama Limited, Bangalore, the Executive Engineer, K.N.N.L., SLI Division. Dharwad, Karnataka invites 03 Nos of Tenders** on Turnkey basis in Two Cover System from the eligible registered Civil Contractor. The intending bidders can submit their bids as an Individual / Firm / Company for the Work of **"Filling up of Additional 26 Tanks under Shiggaon Lift Irrigation Scheme" (Extension of Hotanhalli and Chandapura Tank Filling Scheme) (i) Package - 1 : Pumping Machinery and Construction of Sump Cum Pump House and Construction of Substation & Construction of Tapping Point and Erection of 11kV SC Line and O & M for 5 years (Amount put to Tender Rs. 349.89 Lakhs), (ii) Package - 2 : Construction of Rising Main for a Length of 7.760 Km of HDPE Pipe for Extension of Hothanahalli Tank Filling Scheme and O & M for 5 years (Amount put to Tender Rs. 413.27 Lakhs), (iii) Package - 3 : Construction of Bleeder 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 Distribution of HDPE and Construction of Gravity Distribution Network of Chandapura Tank Filling Scheme and O & M for 5 years (Amount put to Tender Rs. 420.86 Lakhs)** through KPP Portal of Government of Karnataka.

The Blank Tender Documents can be Obtained through Website : www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 23-02-2026, 11.00 a.m. onwards and Completed E-tendering Documents can be Submitted upto 05-03-2026, 4.00 p.m. The Pre-Bid Meeting is Scheduled on 02-03-2026 at 11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. in the Office of Executive Engineer, K.N.N.L., Shiggaon SLI Division, Dharwad. The Technical Bid will be Opened on 06-03-2026 at 4.30 p.m. and Financial Bids of Successful Tenders will be Opened on 09-03-2026 at 11.00 a.m. or after Obtaining approval to the Technical Bid.

Any Addendum / Corrigendum shall be published in the KPP Portal only. The undersigned reserves the right to postpone, accept, reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Sd/- Manjunath B.,
Executive Engineer,
K.N.N.L., SLI Division, Dharwad.

DIPR/Dharwad/1240/Manipal/2025-26

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Through KPP portal only)

BWSSB invites Tenders from eligible contractors for the following Works:

Office of the Chief Engineer (Design & QA), 9th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K. G. Road, Bangalore-09.

Division	IFT Number	Amount Put to Tender / EMD Amount	Last date & Time for submission of tender	Date & Time for opening of tender
Quality Assurance	BWSSB/EQATE/PB/1714/2025-26 Dt: 16.02.2026	Rs.37,84,272/- / Rs.75,700/-	25-02-2026 upto 5.30 p.m.	27-02-2026 at 12.00 Noon

Sd/- Executive Engineer (Quality Assurance).

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/AAPL/RO5696/25-26

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN:U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No. CEE/TZM/Tr(Op)SEE(O)/AEE-1/2025-26/9423-25 Date:12.02.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPP Portal Only)

KPTCL invites bids for the following works:

1) KPTCL/CEE/TZ/OP/MYS/SEE(O)/AEE-1/25-26/817/CALL-2 for Construction of 2nd circuit on existing DC towers from existing Jakkanahalli-Nagamanagala tap point to 66/11KV G. Malligere ss for a distance of about 1.36Kms with coyote ACSR conductor in Pandavapura Taluk, Mandya District along with construction of 01 No. of 66KV Terminal Bay at existing G. Malligere 66/11KV ss for making LILO arrangement to Jakkanahalli-Nagamangala Tap point in Pandavapura Taluk, Mandya district **on Total TurnKey (TTK) basis-CALL-2 (Category: Others).**

2) KPTCL/CEE/TZ/OP/MYS/SEE(O)/AEE-1/25-26/818/CALL-2 for Radial arrangement to 66kV Ganjigere ss from 66/11kV Bookanakere ss for a distance of 0.1 Km in K.R.Pet Taluk, Mandya Ditrict and Construction of 01 No of 66 kV Terminal Bay at existing Bookanakere 66/11 kV ss along with providing metering and protection to 66kV incoming line at 66/11kV Ganjigere ss in K.R Pete Taluk, Mandya District **on Total Turn Key (TTK) basis-CALL-2 (Category: Others).**

The bids will be received through electronic tendering mode only. The detailed notification regarding the subject Enquiry in the KPP portal can be obtained by logging into KPPP website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** OR KPTCL website **https://kptcl.karanataka.gov.in** or click on hyperlink **'E Procurement KPTCL'** on or after **18.02.2026.** Any other details can be had from the **Office of the under sign**

Sd/- Chief Engineer, (Ele.)
Transmission(Operations) Zone, KPTCL,
Prasarana Bhavana, FTS Compound,
N.R. Mohalla, Mysuru-570 007.

D K Suresh hints at action over Nandini 'misinformation'

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bangalore Milk Union (Bamul) president D K Suresh said on Tuesday that the board meeting would decide on action to be taken against those spreading 'misinformation' about the quality of Nandini products.

In the last few days, social media posts have claimed that consuming certain Nandini products could lead to cancer, causing confusion and panic among citizens. "Nandini products are known for their quality. There is absolutely no adulteration. Miscreants are spreading false information and we will decide at the board meeting on what action has to be taken," said Suresh, the younger brother of DyCM D K Shivakumar.

Responding to a question, Suresh said certain private companies might be behind the 'misinformation' campaign because Nandini was giving them a tough competition. "Private companies may or may not be behind it but we have to understand that such allegations are common when there is a tough competition for private companies. However, Nandini has neither compromised on its quality nor on what is paid to farmers," he said.

9.02 lakh students to appear for SSLC exam this year

Minister asks students to wean themselves off social media

BENGALURU, DHNS

A record 9.02 lakh students from across the state have registered for the 2026 SSLC-1 examination scheduled between March 18 and April 2.

Of the 9,02,889 students who have registered for the exam this year, 8.12 lakh will be appearing in the exam for the first time, besides 62,845 repeaters and 27,189 private candidates, according to information shared by Minister for School Education and Literacy Madhu Bangarappa. Last year, 8.96 lakh students had registered for the key examination.

At a press conference, Madhu asked SSLC and second-year PU students to stay away from social media sites lest they get distracted by the dubious stories that are spread on those portals.

The minister said that the department would take all the necessary precautions to prevent question papers from being leaked. "Action will be initiated against those involved in spreading rumours about leaked papers," said Madhu, adding that the department was closely monitoring social media sites to flag and scotch such rumours. "We will enlist the help of Cyber Police to block accounts of miscreants spreading misleading information. We have already taken action against habitual offenders," said the minister.

Meanwhile, 7,10,363 students have registered for the 2026 second-year PU examinations, of whom 6,46,801 are freshers, 50,540 are repeaters and 13,022 are private candidates. While registration is highest for the Science stream, with 2.92 lakh students, 2.11 lakh Commerce students will be writing the exam this year. However, the number of students from the Arts stream who have registered is only 1.42 lakh.

Acknowledging the declining interest in Arts, Madhu said, "Enrolment for the Arts stream has seen a drastic reduction. In a few years, Arts courses will not be in demand. So, we have decided to increase the number of seats for the Science and Commerce sections at government colleges."

There will be no awarding of grace marks, confirmed the minister, who, however, refrained from speaking on the dress code for examinations given that the issue is pending before the court.

Meanwhile, the department has extended the deadline for renewal of recognition till March 31 bringing relief for students at unauthorised schools. This will eliminate the need to tag students appearing for the SSLC examination to other schools.

Helpline

The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board has set up a helpline to help students cope with stress. Students feeling anxious ahead of the exams can call: 080-23310075/76.

Tentative dates for results

In a first, the Department of School Education and Literacy has announced the tentative dates for the declaration of SSLC (1) and second-year PU exam results. While the results for the SSLC exam are likely to be announced on April 24, they will be declared for second-year PU exams on April 7. The department has also put out the schedule for the second round of SSLC exams, which will be held from May 18 to 25, while the second round of II PU exams will be conducted between April 25 and May 9.

Free bus rides

Students appearing for the SSLC and II PU examinations will be entitled to free rides on BMTC and KSRTC buses this year as well provided they show their admission ticket. Meanwhile, Madhu Bangarappa called on private bus operators to offer free rides to the students as well. Given that the public mostly relies on private buses in the Coastal and Malnad regions, this would greatly benefit the students in these areas, the minister said. Deputy Commissioners of all districts have been instructed to make arrangements so students from remote places have no difficulty reaching the examination centres.

Arun Yogiraj to sculpt 87 pillars at 87 places Gandhi visited in state

Project to cost Rs 5.09 crore; work exempted from Transparency Act

BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government has roped in Arun Yogiraj, the sculptor behind the Rama idol in Ayodhya, to make 87 pillars in as many places across Karnataka that were visited by Mahatma Gandhi during his lifetime.

The 87 pillars will be erected at a cost of Rs 5.09 crore, for which the government has exempted itself from the tender process to entrust the work to Arun's Kashyapa Shilpa Kalanikethana, based in Mysuru. A recent notification gives the department of information and public relations an exemption from the tender process as per Section 4(g) of the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements (KTPP) Act.

A fifth generation sculptor, Arun has made over 10,000 statues. In January 2024, the Baala Rama idol made by Arun was consecrated at Ayodhya. In December that year, a 25-foot bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi sculpted by him was inaugurated at the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi. Arun also sculpted the statue of Constitution architect B R Ambedkar at Jaisalmer House in Delhi. His other works include the statues of Subhash Chandra Bose (India Gate) and Adi Shankaracharya (Kedarnath).

The government's decision to instal pillars at each of the 87 locations visited by Gandhi is a part of the year-long 'Gandhi Bharata' campaign.

The campaign, which started in December 2024, marked a hundred years of Gandhi presiding over the historic Belgaum (now Belagavi) session of Congress in 1924.

Government records show that Gandhi's first visit to Karnataka (then the princely state of Mysore) was in 2015 when he made a short visit to Bengaluru to unveil the portrait of Gopala Krishan Gokhale.

"On his way to Bengaluru, he was garlanded and honoured on the platform at the Bangarapet railway station by the local Gujarati merchants," according to the Handbook of Karnataka 2015, brought out by the gazetteer department.

Between 1920 and 1937, Gandhi visited Nippani, Chikkodi, Hukkeri, Sankeshwar, Dharwad, Bagalkot, Vijayapura, Ballari, Yelahanka, Tumakuru, Madhugiri, Srirangapatna, Ramanagara, Kanakapura, Arsikere, Shivamogga, Kundapur among other locations.

"During April 1937, Gandhi visited Hudali (in Belagavi), an important Khadi centre, to inaugurate a Khadi exhibition. He stayed there from April 16 to 21. It was his last visit to Karnataka," the handbook stated. Under 'Gandhi Bharata', the government has also announced that a Kannada version of the Academy award-winning *Gandhi*, the 1982 biopic by Richard Attenborough, will be produced.

Bus transport unions' protest meeting tomorrow over arrears, pay hike

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bus transport employees' unions will undertake a protest rally in Bengaluru on Thursday for the fulfillment of two of their long-pending demands.

The Joint Action Committee of the Trade Unions of Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation, which represents six employee unions, has been demanding the payment of Rs 1,785 crore in arrears for 38 months (January 1, 2020, to February 28, 2023) and a 25% pay hike from January 1, 2024.

On November 26 last year, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah held a meeting with the committee representatives and offered a pay hike from April 1, 2026. He also reiterated his offer to clear Rs 718 crore in arrears for 14 months (from January 1, 2022, to February 28, 2023).

On December 13, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy called a meeting and presented certain proposals on behalf of the transport corporations. However, the committee did not accept the proposals and reiterated the demands. Reddy assured that he would discuss the matter with the chief minister and convene another meeting to resolve the issue. The committee said the assurance was not fulfilled.

Stating that the government and the management of transport corporations are testing the limits of the workers' patience, the committee had called for a 'Bengaluru Chalo' protest meeting at Freedom Park on January 29 but postponed it following the passing away of the committee's convenor and veteran trade union leader, H V Ananth Subbarao.

The committee had earlier called a strike on August 5, 2025, after a similar meeting failed.

The strike, which disrupted bus services across Karnataka, was called off following a high court directive.

DH Classifieds
More value, more impact
email: classifieds@deccanherald.co.in
For your Classified Advertisements, Contact:
080 - 45557160 /161/ 162/ 163/ 164/
98451 14560 / 97318 10277/ 9886213331

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Teachers/ Professors

MODERN PUBLIC ENGLISH SCHOOL, RT.Nagar, Bangalore-32 requires qualified ACADEMIC COORDINATORS and TEACHERS for ALL SUBJECTS for PRIMARY and HIGH SCHOOL. Whatsapp CV:9739981605 www.mpes-edu.com

M.S.RAMAIAH FOUNDATION
RAMAIAH INSTITUTE OF LEGAL STUDIES (RILS)
Affiliated to Karnataka State Law University, Hubballi, Karnataka
Recognized by BAR Council of India, New Delhi
INVITES APPLICATIONS
from eligible candidates for the posts of...
Assistant Professor (Law)
LL.M., with 55% Marks
Guest Faculty (Pre - Law)
MBA / M.Com
Preference will be given to those who have minimum 3 Year Experience, & NET / SLET Qualified candidates
Interested candidates may send the applications / CV through email : director@rimsbangalore.in within 10days
No.23, M S Ramaiah Road, Gokula Extention, Bangalore - 560 054
DIRECTOR

THE REGENCY Institutions Vidyaranyapura, Bengaluru-560097 is Hiring for School. Art and Craft, Western Music Teacher for PUC. Accountancy & English Faculty. Graduation/Master's Degree in the Subject with Minimum 3 Years Experience. Send Resume to faculty22recruit@gmail.com, Phone. 080-29533770

WANTED TEACHER Primary All Subject and High schools Maths, Hindi and Computer Teacher (1 std to 10 Std) for Lewa English High School Woc Road, Mahaganapathinagar Rajajinagar, Bangalore- 10 Email: lewa.bangalore@gmail.com Contact: 9742964160/ 080-23350167/ 9916327680

HOLY ANGEL'S High School,Hampinagar, Vijayanagar, Bengaluru-560104. Phone: 23404465/23202042 holyangels.highschoolrpclayout@gmail.com Requires Experienced Trained Teachers for the Academic year 2026-27. Nursery, Primary, High-School, English, Mathematics, Science, SocialScience & ComputerTeacher. STATE & ICSE. Qualification: B.A./B.Sc.,B.Ed/ M.A./M.Sc,M.Ed, NTT, CPEd. Only English Medium Candidates need to apply

Swamy Vivekananda Rural Education Society®1963
Chandapura, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore-560099
Mob : 9606009890 / 92 / 94 / 96
website address:www.svres.org Email :hrsvres1963@gmail.com
Invites applications for recruitment to the following posts
SV School (ICSE)/ SVR English Medium School / SVR Kannada Medium School/ SVR First Grade College
Assistant Teachers/Lecturers :
1) English : M.A/B.A, B.Ed
2) Mathematics /Physics/Chemistry : M.Sc/B.Sc, B.Ed
3) Hindi : M.A/B.A, B.Ed
4) Physical Education : M.PEd/B.PEd
Librarian : M.Lib/B.Lib
Note: First Grade College-NET / SLET qualified candidates will be preferred.
Interested and eligible candidates with relevant experience are requested to send Bio Data addressed to the Secretary, SVRES with copies of relevant documents through mail or whatsapp to reach us on or before 25/02/2026.
Attractive salary offered

CAMLIN HIGH School, State Board. 6th 'C' Main, 4th Cross Near 7th Main Bus Stop Hampinagar Bangalore- 560104 080-23301363. Email: camlinschool84@gmail.com. REQUIRES for the academic year 26-27 Coordinator, Student Counselor Teachers for High School. Middle and Primary. Kannada English, Hindi Maths Science, Social Science Drawing Physical Education Computer Science. TCH/ D.ED./ NTT/ MTT. Apply with hand written application OR Send resume. English Medium candidates to apply. Candidates can come to give Demo classes. Bus Driver Security Guard Office Boy Helper Aya.

Accounts & Finance

SUPPLY CHAIN Executive Required Immediately for PVT. LTD. Company in Peenya. Commerce Graduate with Accounting Knowledge with Tally Prime. 3 Years Experience In Materials Handling Contact over Phone 8073782160 or mail Resume to finance@sensarom.com. . . .

B.COM GRADUATES with 75% and above Marks having Experience of 1 to 2 Years in Tally and Income Tax/GST.Send Your Resume to: acharyaandcompany@gmail.com. Mob: 9901612959.

General

JOB OPENING- Delivery Boys/ Store Assistant. Vasa Scientific Co., Malleswaram, Bangalore. Qualification: PUC/ SSLC, Salary: Rs.30,000 per month (PF & Insurance deduction applicable), Work: Delivery & Store/ Warehouse Assistance, Preferred Two-wheeler driving with valid License. Contact:- Nicholas Gerard G- 9980073265. Interested Candidates can Call/ Whatsapp.

ಬೇಕಾಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ
ಡೆಲಿವರಿ ಬಾಯ್ಸ್
ಫರ್ನಿಚರ್ ಗೊಡೌನ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸಕ್ಕೆ. ಕೆಲಸದ ಸಮಯ: ಸೋಮ-ಶನಿ 10-6.30
ಸಂದರ್ಶನಕ್ಕೆ ಆಧಾರ್ ಕಾರ್ಡ್ ಮತ್ತು ಫೋಟೋ ಸಮೇತ ಬನ್ನಿ:
ಪ್ಯಾನ್ ಆಫೀಸ್ ಸಿಸ್ಟಮ್ಸ್ ಪ್ರೈ.ಲಿ. ನಂ. ೫, ಒಂದನೇ "ಅ" ಕ್ರಾಸ್, ಬಿಸ್ಮಿಲ್ಲಾನಗರ್, ಬನ್ನೇರುಘಟ್ಟ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು - 29.
Ph: 9341221125

HRD & Admin

WANTED FRONT OFFICE ASSISTANT Cum HR, Graduate with Computer Knowledge for`Real Estate Company at HSR Layout Contact: 9663207070

Wanted

WANTED TECHNICAL consultant for Manufacturing of HT SF6 breakers and RMU for Existing electrical industry in Bangalore. Contact: 9590132003. . . . .

Graphic Designers

WANTED MALE Graphic Designer (Corel Draw Photoshop Illustrator) Pvt Ltd Company around Rajajinagar Contact: 9108458798/ 9845579620

BUSINESS

Business to Business

Finance

URGENT LOAN avail @ 3.5% per Annum Personal, Business, Educational Takeover All types of Loan Shivganga Finance Call/ WhatsApp: 8826494700. . . .

RENTAL PROPERTIES

Accommodation Available

Commercial

COMMERCIAL SPACE Available FOR RENT on Chamundi Hill Main Road, Mysuru. Prime Location. 2500 sft upto 5000 sft. available Contact: 9035035399

BUILDERS ESSENTIAL

Water Proofing

LEAKAGE... LEAKAGE... Old/New Building, Sump, Bathroom, Wallcrack, Skylight, Terrace Waterproofing done by New Technology- 9880916988

EPOXY GROUTING for bathroom & balconies. Heat reflecting coating for terraces. Contact Roof & Walls, Bangalore. 9845987989

REAL ESTATE SELLING

House

Anjanapura

ANJANAPURA BDA 4TH BLOCK BRAND NEW DUPLEX HOUSE BUILT ON 700 SQFT WITH LIFT OWNER 9980079792

REAL ESTATE BUYING

General

General

WE_DO FUNDING & Solutions/ Settlements for disputed properties under Bank,High Court, Civil/DC/AC/ Tribunal/Tahsildar courts pending cases. Contact Verna Developers, Barton Centre, MG Road,Blr. 9620253180.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Form No. URC-2
Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI
[Pursuant to section 374(b) of the companies Act, 2013 and rule 4(1) of the companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014]
Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application has been made to the Registrar at Bangalore that **Superpacks Business Solutions LLP,** a Limited Liability Partnership may be registered under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a company limited by shares.
The principal objects of the company are as follows:
The Business shall be in the nature of manufacturing corrugated boxes, cartons, etc. and supplying the same to industries like healthcare, IT, retail amongst others.
A copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the proposed company may be inspected at the office at 4th Floor, Chitrapur Bhavan, 8th Main, 15th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bangalore 560055.
Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Registrar at Central Registration Centre (CRC), Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), Plot No. 6, 7, 8, Sector-5, IMT Manesar, District Gurgaon (Haryana), Pin Code-122050, within twenty one days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its registered office.
Name(s) of Applicant
Aditi Kadur,
Uday Madhukar Bapu
Abishek Kadur
Chandrika Kadur
Date: 18-02-2026, Bengaluru

CONNECT

KARNATAKA'S BIGGEST OG SEERE UTSAVA 2.0 IS BACK
100000 + Sarees 20,000 + Designs 2000 + Varieties
MYSORE SILKS Weaver's OG Seere Utsava By Sulakshmi Silks
Lowest Price Guaranteed Direct Weaver's Prices
100 YEARS OF TRUSTED LEGACY
SULAKSHMI SILKS
18th to 28th FEB 2026
11 AM TO 9 PM
SIGNATURE SILK SAREE COLLECTIONS
• Pure Mysore Silk • Kanjeevaram • Patola
• Banaras • Uppada • Paihani • Chanderi
• Gadwal • Ilkal • Pochampally • Muga
• Bhagalpur • Ikat • Jamdhani • Arni
• Gajji • Bandhani • Cotton Classics
• Crepe • Bangalore Silk & More
Sri Suryodaya Kalyana Mantapa
West of Chord Road, Vijayanagar
99727 18898 | 96631 27606
93531 38343 | 98863 06643

PERSONAL

Change of Name

CHANGE OF NAME I, **H S RENUKAMMA** and **RENUKAMMA HULIYAPURA REVANASIDDAIAH SIDDARAJU,** residing at No.173, 14th Cross, 1st Block, Rajajinagar, Bengaluru- 560010 declare that the above name pertain to me only. Henceforth I shall be known as **HULIYAPURA SIDDARAJU RENUKAMMA,** vide affidavit dt. 16-02-2026 before notary K.S. Girdhar, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME I, **SANDHIYA MOHANAVEL ANGAPPA,** residing at # 65, 1st Floor, 3rd Cross, Ramaiah Reddy Colony, B Sector, Basavanagar, Bengaluru- 560037, have changed my name to **SANDHIYA MOHANAVEL** vide affidavit dated 16/02/2026, before notary A.R. Muneer Ahmed, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be called as **SANDHIYA MOHANAVEL** only.

I, ANITHA N W/o NAGARAJA G, have changed my name to ANITHA T vide affidavit dated: 17/2/2026 Before Notary Vanajakshi. R Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME I, **Varughese Abraham** (old name) C/o ABRAHAM E V, R/at No 63, Bens Venkateshwara Layout, Yarappanahalli, Doddagubbi, Sr. SRK Nagar post, Bengaluru-560077, Here by declare that I have changed the name as **VARGHESE ABRAHAM** (as per aadhar card) for all purposes vide affidavit dtd: 16.02.2026, before notary D Rajanna, Bengaluru

Lost

DOCUMENT LOST I, **Mohammed Fuzail Muzammil,** No. 17, 1st Cross, Gospel Street St Thomas Town, Bangalore-84, have lost my **Original Degree Certificate Bachelor of Computer Applications Reg No. 12P4SB6066 of May 2017, on 30-12-2025 Bangalore University. Lost Report No. 2011089/2026, dtd 16-01-2026** while in transit If found please **Contact: 9535538535**

DOCUMENT LOST I, **Rukmini S R,** residing at Bengaluru, have a lost **my Site Registration papers Doucment No./Identification: BNG(U)-KNGR/15427/ 2006-2007.** While in transit. if found Please contact: **9620841786**

TOURS & TRAVEL

Travel

AYODHYA, PRAYAGRAJ GAYA KASHI 6 DAYS BY FLIGHT, luxury bus FROM: 08.03.2026 05.04.2026 12.04.2026 19.04.2026 ASSAM KAMAKYA KAZIRANGA MEGHALAYA 8 DAYS FROM: 12.4.2026 YAMUNOTRI GANGOTRI KEDARNATH BADRINATH 14 DAYS FROM: 23.04.2026 29.04.2026 7.05.2026 14.05.2026 MANTRALAYA SRISHILAM,AHOBILAM 5 DAYS FROM: 28.03.2026 Nepal Mukathinath 11days From 12.04.2026 29.04.2026 Contact: 26508925 9980993631. SRICHAITANYA TRAVELS Bangalore.18

CAUTION NOTICE
Readers are advised to make appropriate thorough enquiries before acting upon any advertisement. This newspaper does not vouch or subscribe to the claims and representations made by advertisers.
Advertisement Manager
The Printers (Mysore) Pvt. Ltd. Bengaluru

DH Classifieds More value, more impact
ಪ್ರಜಾವಾಣಿ
RECRUITMENT
BOOK YOUR JOB ADS IN DECCAN HERALD ALL KARNATAKA + PRAJAVANI BENGALURU CITY
CLASSIFIED DISPLAY @ 550/-* PER SQCM
SINGLE / DOUBLE / MULTIPLE COLUMN
www.dhclassifieds.com
BOOK NOW
For more details contact:
+91 9845114560 | +91 9886213331 | +91 9731810277

DECCAN HERALD
Wednesday
February 18, 2026

1000 DAYS OF GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

Karnataka surges ahead with Sri Siddaramaiah

Curated by DH Brandspot

'The State government is always ready for any pro-people project...'

The **Sri Siddaramaiah** government has a strong focus on the upliftment of weaker sections, says **Sri H C Mahadevappa**, Minister of Social Welfare, Government of Karnataka

Your thoughts on implementation of government schemes...

Chief minister Sri Siddaramaiah is always ready to be the voice of the people who are exploited. He is always concerned about backward classes and minorities in the State. His concern for the masses is visible in all the schemes of his government.

Apart from ensuring implementation of the benefits granted during the tenure of the previous government, he has also ensured the new guarantees initiated by him are implemented, demonstrating his concern for the people. With his long experience as finance minister, he has the expertise to allocate funds for various schemes in the Budget. This government has a strong vision for the progress of the backward classes.

Thus, many schemes have touched the lives of the people in the last 1,000 days of this administration.

How has the government responded to the department's plans?

The State government is implementing schemes for the welfare of the people through all departments. I have known Sri Siddaramaiah, who was head of the Social Welfare Department, for the last four decades. Our friendship and socialist principles have helped us in our objectives of working for the economically-weaker sections. That's why the government always supports all the programmes of this department.

Funds have been allocated in the Budget for Scheduled Castes according to the population, SCSP-TSP Act, internal reservation, SC and ST Promotion Reservation Bill, Karnataka State Financial Institution's loan facility of ₹20 lakhs to ₹10 crores (at four per cent interest) for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe entrepreneurs etc. The chief minister has also agreed to provide necessary support for the economically-weaker sections of society. The government has always supported the schemes of the Social Welfare Department.

What are your department's major projects?

The Social Welfare Department in the State has formulated many programmes with the intention of ensuring the values of the Constitution reach all the people. As a part of this objective, Sri Siddaramaiah initiated the caste census.

In order to formulate plans, to create an equal society, along with information on population, statistics of how many people belong to which section is important. That is why, in 2013, the government agreed to the caste census.

Recently, it has been noticed that the youth in the State are increasingly turning communal. We should live with the feeling that all are one. We will not allow any ideologies that inflame tensions between communities. Therefore, we have made it mandatory to read the preamble of the Constitution during prayers in schools and colleges.

Similarly, with the intention of creating more awareness among the people about the Constitution, we formed a Constitution Human Chain on International Democracy Day. This 2,500 km human chain from Bidar to Chamarajanagara with over 2.50 million people created a world record.

Schemes, effective governance guarantee prosperity for the masses

The State government has implemented the promised guarantee schemes successfully, gaining the appreciation of the masses. More guarantees have been initiated too setting the stage for a developed and prosperous State

The State government has given the people 1,000 days of effective administration. The government has left no stone unturned to ensure the process of development continues. Apart from the projects implemented, the government has planned more pro-people programmes that will be commissioned soon.

The government has already completed and delivered the five guarantee schemes promised earlier - Shakti, Gruha Lakshmi, Gruha Jyoti, Yuvanidhi and Annabhagya Schemes - at a cost of ₹1.60 lakh crores. This achievement has been appreciated by the people of the State.

The new scheme – Land Guarantee Scheme – has been added to this list. This is yet another feather in the cap of the government. A large number of people run from pillar to post in search of title deeds. There are many titles stuck in court cases. To alleviate this hardship the Land Guarantee Scheme aims at easy access to title deeds, at the doorstep.

The able leadership of chief minister Sri Siddaramaiah and these projects he is focussing on are of great help to all sections of society. The latest scheme - Land Guarantee Scheme - was launched at a programme held at Haveri. At the launch, deputy chief minister D K Shivakumar announced that he will dedicate yet another scheme to the people.

The government, fully aligned with the expectations of the State's farming community, has announced that it will implement the 'Water Guarantee Scheme' as its 7th guarantee. This ambitious project will help resolve many of the problems faced today, including river water disputes, groundwater dependence in the State and challenge of providing drinking water to everyone along with adequate water for agriculture.

In conclusion, the State government has not only implemented guarantees for the first time in the country but has also become a model, and gained recognition and appreciation of the masses.

Forest Dept gets funds for tourism, development

In the State Budgets for 2024-25 and 2025-26, ₹2,000 and ₹2,500 crores have been allocated to the Forest and Environment Department. Of this, excluding staff salaries, about 40 per cent of the funds are being used for development works.

These include:

Wildlife Compensation Fund: The government has significantly increased the compensation for damage caused by wild animal attacks. The compensation has been increased to Rs 15 lakhs for loss of life and ₹10 lakhs for permanent disability. Apart from this compensation will also be provided for crop damage.

Wildlife Task Force: New task forces have been formed at Hassan, Kodagu and Chikkamagaluru districts to prevent elephant attacks, and an additional grant of Rs 10-15 crores has been provided.

Afforestation: Over ₹500 crores is being used for afforestation and soil conservation under the Centre-State partnership.

Model nurseries: ₹25-50 lakhs have been spent to establish model nurseries in each taluk.

Eco-tourism and staff recruitment: Recruitment process for over 500 forest guards and drivers has been initiated to address the shortage of staff. An annual revenue of around ₹50-80 crores is expected through eco-tourism, which is being used again for forest development.

Land guarantee to provide relief from land disputes

Sri Krishna Byre Gowda, Minister of Revenue, Government of Karnataka shares some highlights of the land guarantee scheme and how it helps the masses access land titles

Elaborate on the Land Guarantee Scheme.

More than half the cases in courts today are related to land disputes. Our government understands the hardships people are facing due to these cases. That's why, for the first time in the country, we have implemented the Land Guarantee Scheme. It is an innovative scheme that will save people from long legal battles. This scheme helps people access land records at their doorstep. We have ensured over two lakh families received land records so far. Revenue services have been digitised so that people can access the services of the Revenue Department online.

What are the major pro-people schemes of the Revenue Department?

Many projects have been initiated in the State to make the Revenue Department people-friendly. For many years, files not being available in the Revenue Department was a major challenge. To solve this problem, the State government has given a digital touch to make these offices paperless. The Revenue Department now offers paperless transactions right from the revenue inspector to the office of the minister.

We have a project to protect government land in the State, and 14.30 lakh properties have been protected so far. People-friendly administration is making life easier for the masses.

Some new initiatives in the Revenue Department...

The survey division and registration offices of the Revenue Department in the State were always crowded. Due to land disputes, people used to look at these departments with aversion. However, after the Honourable Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and Congress party in the State gave me the post of Minister of Revenue Department, I decided to change this.

I decided to strengthen the Revenue Department across the State. At every level, our staff adapted to these changes. Also, the State government has always provided staff strength. Chief Minister Sri Siddaramaiah allowed the department to appoint 1,000 village accountants in the State. Thus, the implementation of the Revenue Department programmes with adequate staff strength has been successful. In addition, the State government has also responded positively to the purchase of sophisticated equipment for survey work. Thus, the department has been able to bring about vast change thanks to the constant support from the government.

What has been the progress so far?

The guarantees already implemented in the State show the government's concern for the people.

Land guarantee has also been added to this list. Revenue Department staff have been working day and night to implement it across the State. In addition, our staff have visited thousands of houses to make necessary preparations to ensure people are aware on records. With this, today, the stage is set to distribute lakhs of title deeds.

Grants and assistance pave way for development in rural areas

The Congress government led by chief minister Siddaramaiah, during its successful completion of 1,000 days in office, has had a strong focus on development for the masses. The Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Departments have implemented many major schemes to improve the living standards of the people in rural areas.

Key achievements and statistics of the last 1,000 days:

Land guarantee and title deed distribution: A record number of title deeds were distributed under the Land Guarantee Scheme at a conference held at Haveri as part of the government's 1,000-day celebrations. As many as 2.20 lakh families received land titles over the last 1,000 days. Title deeds were distributed to 1.06 lakh beneficiaries at Haveri on February 14, 2026. The objective is to empower landless agricultural labourers and the economically-weaker sections in rural areas with the right to own their land.

Jal Jeevan Mission - Drinking Water: The State government has made significant progress towards providing piped water to every household in rural areas. More than 86 per cent of households in rural areas in the State have been provided with water connections. In the current financial year (2025-26), the State government allocated a grant of ₹11,050 crores for this project. As much as ₹35,698 crores have been spent on the project since its inception, of which the State's share is ₹24,598 crores.

NREGA and the new slogan: Karnataka is at the forefront under the NREGA Scheme that provides employment guarantee to rural people. Approximately ₹6,000 crores is being spent annually on labour and material expenses under the NREGA scheme. Despite the change in the Central government's grant allocation policy, the State has released its share of funds and continued the work.

Gandhi Grama: The government has decided to name buildings of all 6,000 grama panchayats in the state after Mahatma Gandhi.

Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural) - Phase 2: Progress has been made towards making villages open defecation free.

Solid and liquid waste management: Garbage sorting units and 'grey water' management units have been set up in most villages in the State.

Schools - Anganwadi: More than 97 per cent of schools and Anganwadis have been provided with well-equipped toilets and water facilities.

Grama Panchayat strengthening: More than 100 services are being provided online through Bapuji Seva Kendras in Grama Panchayats.

Use of funds: The 15th Finance Commission funds for Panchayat Raj institutions have been adequately used to provide roads, sewerage and street lighting.

Urban upgrades high on agenda

These infrastructure projects will make living more convenient in Bengaluru city for both residents and entrepreneurs

Over the last 1,000 days, the State government has implemented many major projects through the Urban Development Department to upgrade infrastructure and transform the State's cities, especially for the all-round development of Bengaluru.

Here are major highlights:

Brand Bengaluru: This project has been taken up on priority to make Bengaluru a global city. Funds have been allocated for the development of Bengaluru in the 2025-26 budget. ₹1,800 crores has been announced for 21 different projects under 'Brand Bengaluru' for traffic congestion relief, solid waste management, smooth movement and developing a green city.

Namma Metro extension and tunnel road: Massive transport projects have been launched to reduce traffic congestion.

Double-decker flyover: It is proposed to construct a 40.50 km long double-decker flyover along with Metro Phase III.

Tunnel road: A detailed project report is being prepared for the construction of tunnel roads to relieve traffic congestion at major roundabouts in Bengaluru.

Amrita Urban Upgradation Scheme: This scheme is focused on the development of various cities in the State. Road development, parks and drainage systems are being improved in urban areas. In Bengaluru alone, thousands of km of road asphalting has been completed under the chief minister's Amrutha Nagarothana Scheme.

Rajakaluve development and flood control: A huge amount has been allocated to prevent floods during the monsoon season. Funds have been allocated to develop the Koramangala Rajakaluve as a model waterway. Funds have also been allocated for dredging and construction of retaining walls around the city's major Rajakaluves.

Construction of new roads within BBMP limits: Plans have been made to construct 300 km of new roads in the buffer zone of canals. This will help in easing traffic congestion within the city.

Grants for projects that promise to make a difference

Comprehensive development of Bengaluru: ₹7,000 crore for infrastructure upgradation.

Double-decker flyover: Funds set aside to ease traffic congestion.

Brand Bengaluru (21 projects): ₹1,800 crores allocated for improvement of civic amenities.

Construction of new roads (300 km): ₹3,000 crores allocated for development of connecting roads.

Grants for projects

Allocation of funds to conserve forests and mitigate wildlife-human conflict will go a long way in ensuring green cover around cities as well as maintaining eco diversity. This indicates the government's focus on environment conservation

Agriculture Forestry Incentive Scheme:

₹100-120 crores (annually)

There's a total incentive of ₹125 per sapling over three years. Distribution of about 2-3 crore saplings taken up.

Sasya Shyamala Yojana:

₹20-25 crores

This project aims at planting more than 50 lakh saplings in around 48,000 schools in the State.

Prevention of human-wildlife conflict:

₹150-200 crores (including railway barricades)

Rs 15 lakhs compensation to the family of a deceased announced. Construction of about 50-60 km of railway barricades annually initiated.

Green Karnataka Campaign:

Over ₹150 crores

A massive goal of planting an average of five crore saplings every year.

Forest land conservation:

₹10-15 crores (for survey work)

Re-acquisition of about 2,500-3,000 acres of encroached land underway.

SC junks IAS officer's discharge plea in mining case

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Tuesday rejected a plea of an IAS officer seeking discharge in the multi-crore Obulapuram Mining Company case, clearing the decks for her trial.

A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and N Kotiswar Singh upheld the decision of the Telangana High Court which had refused to discharge senior IAS officer Y Srilakshmi. The court had on August 29, 2025 stayed the trial against her and issued notice to the CBI on her plea.

Srilakshmi, who served as Industries & Commerce secretary in Andhra Pradesh between 2006 and 2009, was named in a supplementary charge sheet filed by the CBI in the alleged scam. She moved the trial court seeking discharge, contending there were only suspicions against her and no concrete allegations warranting the framing of charges. The plea, however, was dismissed in 2022.

She subsequently moved the Telangana High Court, which allowed her criminal revision and discharged her on November 8, 2022. The CBI challenged it before the Supreme Court, which on May 7, 2023, set aside the high court order and remitted the matter for a reasoned judgment.

After reconsideration, the high court dismissed her revision petition on July 25 and revived the trial against her.

The CBI claimed Srilakshmi abused her position as a public servant by allegedly favouring Obulapuram Mining Company Private Limited, owned by businessman and former Karnataka minister Gali Janardhan Reddy.

She allegedly omitted the crucial condition of captive mining in the final lease and issued two government notifications in the company's favour, violating provisions of the Mines and Minerals Act, 1957, and the Mineral Concession Rules, 1960.

CM himself will reveal decision on leadership, says Shivakumar

Says no idea about foreign trip of Congress lawmakers

BENGALURU, DHNS:

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah himself will reveal the decision taken on the leadership issue, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said on Tuesday.

"A decision has been taken by the CM, the high command and me. When the time comes, there will be clarity. The CM himself will inform the people of the state," Shivakumar said, lobbing the ball into Siddaramaiah's court.

Shivakumar, who is also the Karnataka Congress president, was reacting to Social Welfare Minister H C Mahadevappa's statement. On Monday, the minister had said that none can force the Congress high command to intervene in the dispute over leadership between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar. "Will the tail wag the dog?" Mahadevappa said.

"Mahadevappa is a big man. Now, he's also a part of the high command. I don't want to talk about it. The party will decide about this," Shivakumar said.

D K SHIVAKUMAR
Deputy Chief Minister

"Mahadevappa is a big man. Now, he's also a part of the high command. I don't want to talk about it. The party will decide about this (change of leadership).

Minister pulls out of tour

Animal Husbandry Minister K Venkatesh said on Tuesday that he was not travelling overseas with other Congress lawmakers. Over 20 lawmakers, most of them Siddaramaiah loyalists, are embarking on a trip to Australia and New Zealand.

"Initially, I was invited. I said I'd come if I could. Now, I'm not going. The others are going with their own money," Venkatesh said. The lawmakers' trip has nothing to do with the leadership tussle between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, Venkatesh said.

Shivakumar said he had no idea about the trip. "Are they going by themselves? Are they being sponsored? As party president, I don't know about this," he said.

Playing down the foreign trip, IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge pointed out that the lawmakers travelled last year, too. "Do they need permission for a private trip?"

No discussion on Dalit CM now: Parameshwara

Home Minister G Parameshwara said there is no discussion on the Dalit chief minister now and the government is focusing on the budget preparation, reports DHNS from Mangaluru.

Reacting to Minister H C Mahadevappa's statement on having a Dalit chief minister, Parameshwara said he (Mahadevappa) has expressed his personal opinion.

Parameshwara

"Mahadevappa is capable and can take up any responsibility. That is why he made the statement. In society, people choose their own leaders and express their opinions. We cannot term it wrong," he said. Parameshwara said the Congress has a high command and it will take a decision on such matters.

"It is not enough if ten people raise slogans in my favour. The high command considers all aspects before making a decision. At present, I don't think such a situation exists. There is no discussion now about a Dalit CM. We are focused on governance," he added. Responding to the issue of Congress MLAs travelling abroad, he said he is not aware of the purpose of their visits. "They can travel anywhere using their money. It may be an exposure visit. Agriculture is everywhere, including Australia," he said.

Congress will bring law for registration of RSS: Priyank

Minister targets Sangh again; asks what is its achievement

BENGALURU, DHNS

Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge on Tuesday defended his remarks on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and his statement that communal tensions were affecting investments in coastal Karnataka.

Priyank reiterated that RSS is not registered under the relevant laws, though it receives donations.

Priyank Kharge

"As per the law, organisations receiving donations must register. If any organisation refuses to register, it is illegal. Am I allowed to run such an organisation?" he sought to know.

He added that if the RSS declares it would not register, the government would consider bringing a law to address it.

"They claim they are into nation-building. Let them list down 10 activities that qualify as nation-building. RSS says every family should produce three children for nation-building. But why are RSS men bachelors?" he added.

Mocking BJP leaders for defending the RSS, he said, "None of these leaders has worn the RSS uniform. Are Vijayendra's children wearing the RSS Ganavesh? I will trust that you (BJP) are from the RSS when you and your children become full-time Pracharaks."

"I want to see if the children of BJP managers attend RSS Shakhas. Send me their photos as proof," he said.

Defending his statement on coastal Karnataka, he said, "Any region, be it Mangaluru, Kalaburagi or Bengaluru, attracts investment only if there is a conducive atmosphere. Like bad roads affect Brand Bengaluru, Brand Mangaluru is affected due to some people."

Citing the Canara Chamber of Commerce and Industry flagging concerns over communal tensions impacting both trade and employment, the minister said the government has a responsibility to respond.

"Instead of trying to prove us wrong, the BJP should acknowledge the issue," he said, adding that the Congress government has called tenders to set up IT parks and was preparing a blueprint for the blue economy in coastal Karnataka.

Countering the BJP's charge that Kalaburagi lacks development, he said cement companies have invested in the district.

He noted that special status under Article 371J was granted to address backwardness, but the BJP had opposed it.

Ashoka dares CM not to 'divert' SCSP/TSP funds for guarantees

BENGALURU, DHNS: Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R Ashoka on Tuesday dared Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to not "divert" funds allotted under the Scheduled Caste Special-Plan/Tribal Sub Plan (SCSP-TSP) for guarantee schemes in the upcoming budget to be tabled on March 6.

In a post on X, he said: "If Chief Minister Siddaramaiah truly has concern for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, let him make it crystal clear on March 6, when he presents the 2026–27 Budget: Not a single rupee of SCSP/TSP funds will be diverted for vote bank guarantees or any other general schemes."

Noting that the SCSP/TSP Act was enacted to ensure proportional and targeted allocation for the education, health, and empowerment of SC/ST communities, Ashoka said it was not a political contingency fund to plug "fiscal mismanagement."

The SCSP/TSP Act was enacted in 2013 during Siddaramaiah's first term as the chief minister.

"March 6 will not just be a budget day. It will be a test of intent. Will this government protect SCSP/TSP funds? Or will it sacrifice them to sustain political guarantees?" he sought to know.

CRANE COMMUNITY

A flock of Demoiselle cranes seen in the watershed area of Malavi dam in Hagaribommanahalli taluk of Vijayanagar district. DH PHOTO

DK peaceful, regaining past glory, says home minister

Contradicting Priyank's claims, Home Minister G Parameshwara said that as per police records, the situation in Dakshina Kannada district had changed significantly, reports DHNS from Mangaluru. "Communal murders and drug menace have come down as per police records and statistics," he said. The decline in criminal activities, including moral policing, were indicators of the prevailing peace and improved law and order," he said.

Social welfare dept to decide on Rohith Vemula Act soon

SUJAY B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Social Welfare Department is likely to decide on whether to frame its own law to prevent harassment of students from the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribe communities in higher education institutions or hand over the existing Bill to the Higher Education Department with its inputs, in a few days.

According to sources, the department is currently comparing the existing Bill with the UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulation 2026, which the Supreme Court has stayed.

While the equity regulations apply to students from the SC, ST and OBC communities, the Rohith Vemula Bill is only applicable to SC/STs.

Karnataka's Rohith Vemula (Protection of SC/STs from Caste Discrimination in Higher Educational Institutions) Bill, drafted by the Campaign for Rohit Act — a collective — was initially sent to the Higher Education Department.

MAVALLI SHANKAR
State chief convener, Dalit Sangharsh Samiti (Ambedkar Vaada)

"The government should not dilly-dally on this. The draft must be published in public. This must be placed in the upcoming Budget session. If not, we will initiate a statewide movement.

The Congress had promised to enact the Rohith Vemula Act in its manifesto for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections if it came to power.

The draft Rohith Vemula Bill, which *DH* has accessed, has proposed a fine of Rs 10 lakh on higher education institutions that fail to prevent caste-based discrimination of SC/ST students on campuses of Higher Education Institutions.

CM should fulfil his commitment: DSS

Dalit Sangharsh Samiti (Ambedkar Vaada) state chief convener Mavalli Shankar urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to stand by his word of implementing the Rohit Vemula Act.

Addressing a press conference, Shankar said the alleged suicide of Dalit activist and PhD scholar Rohit Vemula was an "institutionalised murder."

Hailing the Bill as "a model for the country," Shankar added, "The government should not dilly-dally on this. The draft must be published in public. This must be placed in the upcoming Budget session. If not, we will initiate a statewide movement."

Ashna Singh, assistant professor at the National Law School Bengaluru, explained that the provisions of the Rohith Vemula Act were narrower than the UGC guidelines (only applicable to SC/ST) and more specific.

Recollecting that the erstwhile princely state of Mysore was one of the first to provide reservations in the pre-independence era (through the Miller's Commission), Ashna urged the government to continue this tradition.

Salient features

As per section 4 of the Bill drafted by the Campaign for Rohit Act, harassment of students from SC/ST communities includes implied or explicit threat of physical, mental or economic harm and making derogatory or insinuating remarks that attribute an SC/ST individual's academic or professional underperformance to their caste, interference with the aggrieved person's work, non-action on a complaint of discrimination within the stipulated time, creating an intimidating atmosphere for the aggrieved person after he/she files a complaint, will be considered as caste-based discrimination.

Those violating these provisions will be liable to one or more of the following: written warning, written apology, bond of good behaviour, community service and attending caste-sensitisation workshops.

The students who contravene these provisions can be debarred from entering hostels, writing exams, suspended for a specific period of time and even expelled from the institution.

Faculty contravening these provisions can be liable to adverse remarks in the appraisal, denied reemployment/contract renewal, demoted, suspended during inquiry and even dismissed (one or more of these provisions).

'Likely to be placed in budget session'

IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge said, "The Rohith Vemula Act will only apply to the students from SC/ST communities, unlike the UGC guidelines, which also include OBC students. It may soon come up before the Cabinet and is likely to be placed in the budget session."

Govt 'illegally' allotted 31 plots for Cong offices: Chalavadi

BENGALURU, DHNS: Leader of the Opposition in Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy on Tuesday accused the ruling Congress of 'illegally' obtaining plots of 31 sites for construction of new party offices.

Narayanaswamy told a press meet: "The government is involved in looting land. The government cannot take land wherever it wants — taluk, zilla, mandal, panchayat and so on. They sought to take land illegally in Mudhol to build Congress office. However, the department rejected this. In Chikkaballapur, they took land of 3,404 square metres worth Rs 4.08 crore for Rs 20.42 lakh — merely 5% of guidance value".

"In Badami, 613 square metres costing Rs 24.52 lakh has been bought for merely Rs 1.22 lakh. In Koppal, instead of Rs 1.31 crore, they have got the land for Rs 6.56 lakh (5%). In Mandya, a land worth Rs 1.45 crore has been bought for Rs 7.28 lakh. In Gauribidanur, land worth Rs 90.8 lakh was purchased for 4.54 lakh."

Claiming that officials had said that civic amenity sites cannot be handed over to party activities, the LoP said these files had been placed before the Cabinet and approved.

Reacting to the charge, Deputy CM D K Shivakumar said, "I'm taking plots measuring 3,000, 5,000 and 10,000 sq ft. This is my duty. We're allotting small lands and we're eligible to do that. Some people have gone to court. Let them go".

'Unlawful deletion of voter names': Suspend BLOs, says DKS

'Some of them are committing irregularities in the voters' list'

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) President D K Shivakumar, also the deputy chief minister, on Tuesday met State Election Commissioner G M Sangreshi with a complaint that names of (the people belonging to) minority communities and Scheduled Castes (SCs) are being deleted unlawfully from the electoral rolls.

He requested the election commissioner to suspend the concerned block-level officers (BLOs) who are involved in the illegal exercise.

Leading the delegation, which also included Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao and the legislators of the Congress party, including Rizwan Arshad and A C Srinivas, Shivakumar alleged that some of the BLOs were committing the irregularities in the voters' list.

Complaint lodged

"I have lodged a serious complaint regarding the large-scale deletion of voters from the electoral rolls and the arbitrary shifting of members of the same family to different polling booths across several constituencies in the Greater Bengaluru area," he said in his letter to the election commissioner.

Speaking to the reporters later, he alleged that the votes of minorities and the scheduled castes are being deleted.

"It has come to my notice through multiple representations from the party workers, booth-level agents and the concerned citizens that (the names of) a significant number of genuine voters have been removed from the rolls without due notice or verification. Such irregularities raise grave concerns about the integrity, transparency and fairness of the electoral process," the KPCC president said in the letter.

Audit sought

The delegation sought a comprehensive audit of recent deletions in the electoral rolls, restoration of the names of all the eligible voters who have been wrongly deleted, immediate corrective steps to ensure that members of the same household are not arbitrarily distributed across different polling booths and an opportunity for political parties to review and verify the revised rolls before final publication.

The meeting comes at a time when the Election Commission has undertaken the revision of electoral rolls, an exercise taken up ahead of the civic body polls, due ever since September 2020.

The Election Commission, the deputy chief minister said, is responsible for conducting the elections as well as for the preparation of the electoral rolls.

D K SHIVAKUMAR
KPCC president and DyCM

"It has come to my notice through multiple representations from the party workers, booth-level agents and concerned citizens that (the names of) a significant number of genuine voters have been removed from the rolls without due notice or verification. Such irregularities raise grave concerns about the integrity, transparency and fairness of the electoral process.

Intervention sought

"Given the urgency and seriousness of the matter, we request immediate intervention and a time-bound response detailing the corrective measures undertaken," Shivakumar said in his letter to the Election Commission, which was later shared with the media.

Two boys 'assaulted' for pelting stones at house in C'magaluru

CHIKKAMAGALURU, DHNS

Sudha, who belongs to a Scheduled Caste, said that incidents of stone pelting on her house had been occurring over the past week

Tension prevailed in Chikkamagaluru after two boys who were allegedly pelting stones at a woman's house, were caught and assaulted by a group of BJP Yuva Morcha and Bajrang Dal activists in Chikkamagaluru on Tuesday.

Acting on a complaint filed by Sudha H G, at whose home stones were being pelted, a case has been registered against six individuals, while another case has been filed against Chikkamagaluru District president of BJP Yuva Morcha Santosh Kotian and Bajrang Dal activist Shyam Gowda.

On Monday night, a group of six boys were making rounds of the street in Vijayapura Layout. When the boys were reportedly pelting stones at Sudha's house, the locals, BJP and Bajrang Dal members among them, stepped out and caught two of the boys, while the remaining four fled the spot. The two boys were subsequently assaulted and handed over to the police. Sources confirmed that the two boys were admitted to the Chikkamagaluru District Hospital.

Sudha, who belongs to a Scheduled Caste, said that such incidents had been occurring over the past week. She has demanded that the suspects be booked under provisions of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Meanwhile, at the police station, Muslims assembled to protest the alleged assault on the two boys by BJP and Bajrang Dal activists. With both groups gathering outside the station around midnight, police were forced to intervene to prevent the situation from escalating further.

On being informed of the incident, Home Minister G Parameshwara in Mangaluru said that police would initiate action in keeping with the law.

"Since the victim hails from a SC community, police will book a case under provisions of the Protection of Civil Rights Act as well," he added.

RCB women's team gets all-new Chetak C25

Bajaj Auto Ltd congratulated Royal Challengers Bengaluru's women's team on winning the Women's Premier League. The company gifted its all-new Chetak C25 to every player of the title-winning squad in recognition of their outstanding performance and fighting spirit throughout the season.

The gesture marks the culmination of a memorable season in which Chetak proudly served as the Official Ride Partner of the RCB women's team, supporting them through a campaign defined by confidence, resilience and ambition. Bengaluru's favourite team and its home city came on top once again, reflecting a shared belief in progress, energy and modern urban identity.

The association also coincides with the launch of the new Chetak C25, a younger, lighter and more expressive addition to the Chetak portfolio. Designed for fast-moving city life, the C25 mirrors the very qualities that defined RCB women's championship run - agility, composure under pressure and the confidence to take on every challenge, while staying grounded in the core Chetak values of solidity, stability and reliability.

Speaking on the occasion, Sumeet Narang, President - Marketing, Bajaj Auto Ltd, said, "Congratulations to the Royal Challengers Bangaluru's women's team on the historic 2026 victory. Their resilience and confidence perfectly mirror the values of Chetak. This partnership blends with our solid foundation and the ambition of a new generation. To celebrate their dominance, we are gifting the all-new Chetak C25 to each of the RCB women's players. Designed for Bengaluru's vibrant urban spirit and young riders, the C25 stays true to our heritage."

Rajesh Menon, COO, Royal Challengers Bengaluru, said, "Chetak added strong value to our season, deepening fan engagement on and off the field. Their reliability, design and everyday ease resonate with our young, urban fans, making this partnership a seamless match."

With over 21 million motorcycles sold in over 100 countries, the Bajaj brand is truly 'the world's favourite Indian'. It is India's leading motorcycle exporter. The company is also the world's largest manufacturer of three-wheelers. Bajaj Auto sold over 4.60 million units and achieved a turnover of over USD 7.50 billion in the financial year 2024-25, with class leading profitability and continues to be the world's most valuable two-wheeler and three-wheeler company. It has been delivering products that have best-in-class design and technology and are built on uncompromised quality for the past 75 years.

Curated by DH Brandspot

Rare disease treatment a pain after Rs 50L aid exhausts

Expenses in pvt hosps, long-term sustenance challenges

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

India's rare disease policy promises treatment worth Rs 50 lakh per patient battling with 62 kinds of diseases listed under the National Rare Disease Policy (NRDP) 2021.

But for families battling life-long genetic disorders, the cap often runs out before the treatment does, leaving them halfway to either crowdsource or abandon therapy.

The policy has divided the diseases into three groups: Group 1 which requires procedures such as Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) or organ transplantation.

Group 2 which requires long term treatment but at low cost and group 3, requiring lifelong treatment at high cost.

Prasanna Shirol, co-founder and executive director of Organisation for Rare Disease of India (ORDI) told to *DH*, "The problem here is that for group 1 patients, many government hospitals do not have facilities and they are asked to go to private hospitals. The treatment is expensive in private hospitals, which will lead to funds exhausting soon".

"In group 2, it is manageable. But group 3 faces bigger problems as it includes Lysosomal Storage Disorder (LSD), which requires long-term treatment. In 2016, Karnataka became the first state to announce financial support for people with LSD. But in 2024, the support was stopped," he said.

There are no updates if the support will be revived, said Shirol.

Another association requesting anonymity said, "Rare disease is a very unfortunate fate. In the 62 diseases listed, a few of the diseases have treatments, other diseases do not have treatment in India and the rest do not have any treatment at all. But for diseases with no treatment, the government should at least provide some support or interventions".

For patients of diseases under group 1, who may require organ transplantation, government hospitals do not have the required facilities. Patients are asked to go to private hospitals, where treatment is expensive, which leads to funds exhausting soon.

The patients diagnosed with rare diseases that *DH* spoke to said after they were diagnosed, they had to let go of their previous lifestyle, forcing many into unemployment and debt.

They said they were happy for the support, but that it was not enough.

Dr Sanjeeva G N, professor of paediatrics and nodal officer of Centre Of Excellence for Rare Diseases, said, "As for the funding amount, there are no problems. The problem is with group 3 as there is nothing we can do after treatment worth 50 lakh is over. The disease relapses once the treatment is stopped".

One more held in Navy info case

▸ **UDUPI, DHNS:** The Malpe police have arrested a 21-year-old man in connection with a case involving the alleged transmission of confidential information related to Indian Navy vessels. Alif Islam of West Bengal is the fifth suspect arrested in this case.

Corruption rate card advertisement: High court quashes BJP's defamation suit against Rahul Gandhi

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka high court has quashed proceedings against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a defamation suit initiated by the BJP over advertisements issued on May 5, 2023, with the title 'corruption rate card' against the then ruling BJP government.

Justice Sunil Dutt Yadav allowed the petition filed by Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, observing a series of procedural lapses on the part of the trial court in registering the criminal case and issuance of summons.

The complaint, alleging defamation through placing advertisements in mainstream newspapers in the run-up to the assembly election, was filed by the BJP, represented by its state secretary S Keshava Prasad. The complaint named Rahul Gandhi (accused number 4) and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar.

The complaint cited a tweet regarding the advertisement posted by Gandhi and alleged that he had issued directions to other accused to place the advertisements. It was submitted on behalf of Gandhi that the case rests on subjective inferences and perceptions and not based on any objective material. It was also argued that there is no evidence that the petitioner gave instructions to carry out the publication.

After examining the provisions of defamation - IPC sections 499 and 500 - the court noted that an imputation that a political party is corrupt is by itself defamatory and the entity which is alleged to be corrupt could be the political party. However, where the imputation made is against certain individuals or class of persons in the entity, then the person aggrieved would be such individuals or class of persons within the larger entity who have been defamed.

Justice Sunil Dutt Yadav said that in the case at hand, the imputation itself is by way of innuendo, and such imputation is sought to be stretched to the party. "The reference that is made in the advertisement is to constitutional functionaries and government employees being beneficiaries and to the irregularities in government schemes. None of the persons or entities referred to above are before this court. Accordingly, the aggrieved person in the advertisement factually cannot be the political party," the court said.

The court further noted that the tweet, referred to in the complaint, was not marked as an exhibit. "The marking of the Tweet though without a 65B certificate (Indian Evidence Act) would still have made a difference insofar as a 65B certificate could have been produced at a subsequent point of time. However, absent the marking of the tweet, the material before the trial Judge when process is issued is legally deficient as there is no material to connect the accused No 4 with the offence of defamation," the court said.

The court also pointed out at no enquiry conducted by the trial court under CrPC section 202, which is mandated where the accused is outside the territorial jurisdiction of the court.

"Considering that accused No 4 resides outside the territorial limits of the Court, non following Section 202 of CrPC procedure has prejudiced the said accused and would also reveal a very casual approach of the complainant in not insisting for such enquiry before summons is issued to accused no 4," the court said.

Karnataka Bank
Your Family Bank. Across India.
Regd. & Head Office: Mangaluru - 575 002 CIN: L85110KA1924PLC001128 E-mail: info@ktkbank.com Visit us at :https://karnatakabank.bank.in

102nd Founders' Day Celebration
Today
18th February 2026, Wednesday 4.00 pm
Venue: Karnataka Bank Auditorium, 4th Floor, Head Office Building Mahaveera Circle, Kankanady, Mangaluru - 575 002

LECTURE by
Shri Debasish Panda,
IAS (Retd.)
Visionary Bureaucrat | Policy Reformer | Technology Enthusiast

PRESIDED by
Shri P Pradeep Kumar
Chairman, Karnataka Bank

Shri Raghavendra S Bhat
Managing Director & CEO, Karnataka Bank

The programme is followed by
All-Women Classical Music Ensemble Concert

Vidushi Manasi Prasad
Vocal

Vidushi Sukanya Ramgopal
Ghatam Tarang

Vidushi C V Shruti
Violin

Vidushi Y G Srilatha Nikshith
Veena

Vidushi Ranjani Siddhanti Venkatesh
Mridangam

Vidushi Bhagyalakshmi Krishna
Morsing

Follow us on : / KarnatakaBank

TOWN PANCHAYAT SHEDBAL
TQ:KAGAWAD DIST:BELAGAVI Website:shedbaltown.mrc.gov.in
email: itstaff_ulb_shedabal@yahoo.com

SL/TPS/TS/2025-26 DATE: 16-02-2026

Publication of ReTender Notification
Only through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal||
(Karnataka Transparency Act 1999 Act 2000 w.e.f.)

ISWM (SBM 2.0) Grants KW-03 for Processing Shed solid waste management during the under Kabbar Pattana Panchayat. 01 Tender are invited for minimum 0.00 lakh maximum 54.28 lakh works tendered. More details can be found at https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. Last date for submission of tenders: 24-02-2026 upto 17:00 hrs. For more information contact Technical Branch of Shedbal Town Panchayat and tender payment as per conditions.

Sd/-Chief Officer TP SHEDBAL DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-1858/KSMCA/2025-26 Sd/-President TP SHEDBAL

CITY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL HOSAPETE
No:6848/6845/5833/CMC/HPT//Tender/2025-26
Dated: 16.02.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION (IFT) E-PROCUREMENT

2025-26th Municipal Fund Tenders are invited for the work mentioned below as per KTPP act 2000 in two cover system are invited from the Contractors/Firms registered in KPWD as mentioned below. in e-procurement the contractors / firms will have to upload all information, documents and rates etc., www.eproc.karnataka.govt.in

01.**Indent No:**DMA/2025-26/SE6848/Call-2. **Work Details:**PROVIDING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF STAGE 1 HEADWORKS RISINGMAIN, WTP& BULKWATER SUPPLY SYSTEM SCHEME TO BALANCING OHTS. **Tender Receiving Last Date:** 23.02.2026. **Estimate Cost (in Lakhs):**99.00

02.**Indent No:**DMA/202526/SE6845/CALL-2.. **Work Details:**Annual Man Power Contract ForSupply of Valve Man For CMC Hosapete. **Tender Receiving Last Date:** 23.02.2026. **Estimate Cost (in Lakhs):**60.00

03.**Indent No:**DMA/2025-26/IND5833/CALL-2. **Work Details:**Supply of various Chemicals to 1st & 2nd Stage Water Treatment Plant in Hosapete city. **Tender Receiving Last Date:** 23.02.2026. **Estimate Cost (in Lakhs):**122.50

any other information required can be obtained from the office of the CMC Hosapete during the working hours

Sd/-Assistant Executive Engineer, CMC Hosapete **Sd/-Municipal Commissioner CMC Hosapete.**

DIPR/Vijayanagar/2025-26/KSMCA/RO No/530

KALABURAGI MAHANAGARA PALIKE, KALABURAGI
Fax No.08472/260776, Phone: 08472/ 278675, Email Id: itstaff_ulb_gulbarga@yahoo.com

No: KMP/TS-01/CF-UGD/DC-65/Z-2Recall-2/2025-26 Date: 16.02.2026

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION NO./2025-26
DATE: 16.02.2026

1) Name of Work: Mechanized cleaning of sewer lines and Machine hole chambers by sucking, jetting, Roding and desilting machines for operation and maintenance of UGD system of ZONE-2 in Kalaburagi city Corporation for a period of three Year (Jetting Cum Sucking Machine-2, Mini Jetting Machine-1, Desilting cum rodding-1) DMA/2025-26/SE6269/CALL-2, 2) Head of Account: 2025-26 Corporation Fund(01) Operation and Maintenance (O & M) for Mechanized cleaning of sewer lines and Machine hole chambers works. 3) Tender Amount 1. Tender Amount Mini Rs.2,53,00,000.00, 4) Eligibility of Contractor: As per Bid Document. 5) Pre Bid Meeting Date and Time: 04.03.2026 Upto 11:00am, 6) Last Date for Bid Submission: 04.03.2026 Upto 4:30pm 7) Tender opening Date: 05.03.2026 Upto 4:35pm, 8) Tender Financial Bid opening Date 06.03.2026 Upto 11.30am, 9) Cost of Tender Schedule: Tender Fee As Per e-portal EMD Mini/ Max Rs. 3,57,200.00, 10) Contact Address& Mobile No: Executive Engineer, Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi.9620341599 & 9448119141, 11) Web Site www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in

DIPR/Kalaburagi/1083/KSMC&A/2025-26

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi.

Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation Ltd.
(Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
KMDC Bhavan, No.32/821, 2nd Floor, Subedhar Chatram Road,
Opp. Sheshadripuram Police Station, Sheshadripuram, Bengaluru-560 020.

No.K.M.D.C/CR/P.N/2025-26/2721 Dated: 16.02.2026

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

E-Tender is invited from eligible and interested outsourcing agencies for providing outsourced staffing services to the Head Office and District Offices of **Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation Limited (KMDCL)** and for providing housekeeping and security services at KMDC Bhavan. **The tender details are as follows:**

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Name of the Service	Estimated Amount (in lakhs)	Last Date for submission of Tender
1.	KMDCL/2025-26/SE0023	"TENDER FOR PROVIDING HOUSE KEEPING AND SECURITY SERVICE"	36.00	04.03.2026 up to 5.30 p.m.
2.	KMDCL/2025-26/SE0024	"TENDER FOR PROVIDING OUT SOURCE STAFF SERVICE AT HEAD OFFICE OF KMDCL"	145.00	04.03.2026 up to 5.30 p.m.
3.	KMDCL/2025-26/SE0025	"TENDER FOR PROVIDING OUTSOURCE STAFF SERVICE AT DISTRICT OFFICES OF KMDCL"	345.00	04.03.2026 up to 5.30 p.m.

For details, please visit the website address **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/** for details, contact number: **080-22860999,** for further information, contact the General Manager, Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation (KMDCL), Bangalore.

DIPR/CP/RO5691/AAPL/2025-26

Sd/-
Managing Director and Tender Inviting Authority

Government of Karnataka
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEERING DIVISION KALABURAGI

No : EE/PRED/KLB/KKRDB /TS-5/2025-26/6084 Date : 12/02/2026

:: TENDER NOTIFICATION ::

(Through E-procurement Two Cover System)

1) Name of work: Construction of CC Road and Drain in Madkal village, Improvements to Road from Nala to Dodda Nala at Hayyal village, Improvements of Road to Kyaraghatta Siddeshwar temple at Kontapalli village, Improvements to Road from main road to Nala at Kontapalli village in Sedam Taluka under KKRDB for the year 2025-26 **RDPR/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT24437** 2) Head of account: **KKRDB for the year 2025-26**, 3) Amount put to tender: **Rs. 62,68,354.79** 4) Class of Contractor: Class- III and Above, 5) Issue of Blank Tender Documents: **12-02-2026 to 25-02-2026 upto 4.00 pm**, 6) Tender Form Fee: As per KPPP Norms, 7) E.M.D. Fee: Rs. 1,25,500.00, 8) Receipt of completed tender documents: **12-02-2026 to 25-02-2026 upto 4.00 pm,** 9) Technical Bid Opening Date: **26-02-2026 After 4.00 pm**, 10) Financial Bid opening Date: **27-02-2026 After 11.00 am**, 11) For more details contact: Office of the Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Opp: Karnataka Grameen Bank (PKGB) Head office, Kusnoor Road, Rajapur Kalaburagi, 12) Website Address: **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

DIPR/Kalaburagi/1088/KSMC&A/2025-26

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Kalaburagi

ಡಾ. ಮನಮೋಹನ್ ಸಿಂಗ್ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ
Dr. MANMOHAN SINGH BENGALURU CITY UNIVERSITY
ಆಗು ನೀ ಅನಿಕೇತನ
BE BOUNDLESS

Office of the Registrar (Evaluation), Jnana Jyothi Central College Campus, Dr B.R. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru – 560001. Ph: 080-22295559/29572003 | E-Mail ID:registrarevlubcu@gmail.com/regev@bcu.ac.in

No:DMSBCU/Ex.Br./01/Ph.D.Admn/2025-26/615 Date:17.02.2026

NOTIFICATION

Applications are invited from eligible candidates for admission leading to PhD Programme in the prescribed format. Details regarding eligibility, conduct of Entrance Test, provision for exemptions from Entrance test, prescribed fees, mode of payment, subject-wise vacancy position, Research centres etc., are notified in the University Website. The interested candidates may visit the University website: https://bcu.ac.in/onlineapp/ for further details and instructions. The application can be downloaded from the website.

1.The portal will be opened from 19.02.2026.

2.The last date to submit the filled in applications without fine is 18-03-2026 and with fine of Rs 200.00 is 25-03-2026.

The entrance test date will be notified in the University website. The application form along with fees paid receipt and required enclosures should be filled online and the same hard copy should be sent to the Registrar (Evaluation), Dr. Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University, Jnana jyothi Central College Campus, Dr B. R. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-560 001.

DIPR/CP/5695/CCL/2025-26

Sd/-
REGISTRAR (EVALUATION)

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

A truer measure of consumption

In the new series of Consumer Price Index (CPI), there is a well-directed effort towards an accurate representation of consumption habits. With 2024 as the base year, as against 2012 of the previous series which reflected the consumption patterns of 2011-12, the new series takes the parameters closer to contemporary realities. The update is based on consumption patterns reported by the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2023-24. The effectiveness of CPI, which provides an important measure of the economy and is a tool for policy-making, hinges on the way it captures the changes in the economy. The new series has increased the number of items covered from 299 to 358 – goods from 259 to 308 and services from 40 to 50. It collects data from 1,465 rural markets, up from 1,181, and from 1,395 urban markets as against 1,114. Data from online marketplaces has also been collected.

The new series has reduced the weightage of food and clothing and increased the weightage of electronics, housing, and services. When 60% of the population receive free food grains, their prices are no longer a decisive component of household expenditure. An unrealistic weightage for food items was seen as distorting the CPI, making it volatile. Accordingly, the weightage of food and beverages in the overall CPI has been reduced from 45.86% to 36.75%. The new categories in the index include furnishings, household equipment and maintenance with a weightage of 4.47%, information and communication with 3.61%, recreation, sport, and culture with 1.52% and personal care, social protection, and miscellaneous goods and services with 5.04%. These entries reflect the increasing share of these categories in household expenditure and are pointers to the changing needs and spending behaviour of people.

The new CPI framework reflects realistic patterns, promising reliable data for policymaking

Retail inflation stood at 2.75% in January on an annual basis under the new CPI series, compared with 1.33% under the old series in December last year. But a comparison along these lines has limitations because the ingredients considered are different. Apart from being more representative, the new CPI is expected to be more stable and predictable. It is likely to provide more reliable data for economic decision-making, including budgeting, decisions by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on policy rates, and for all financial processes that involve linking to the index, such as dearness allowance decisions. The new CPI series marks a shift towards more pragmatic policymaking. It is a welcome move by the government, strengthened by its decision to revise the base year of CPI and other economic indicators every 3-5 years.

When the wellness promise is stunted

The data is as stark as it is uncomfortable: over 4.8 lakh children in the 0-6 age group in Karnataka are reported to be severely stunted, a figure that serves as a grim balance sheet for the state's welfare promises. Behind the statistic lies a deeper irony. The highest number of severely stunted children – over 50,000 – comes from Belagavi, the home district of the Women and Child Welfare Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar. The previous BJP minister who handled the portfolio, Shashikala Jolle, also hailed from the district. Political representation, clearly, has not translated into nutritional security. The official figure itself is likely an underestimate. The data covers only children registered at Anganwadi centres. Thousands outside the formal welfare net remain invisible to the system. Stunting, defined as low height for age, is evidence of chronic deprivation that begins in the womb and shadows a child throughout life, impairing immunity, learning capacity, and productivity.

Why does stunting persist despite an impressive menu of food-based schemes? The causes are layered. Poor maternal nutrition, early marriages, closely spaced pregnancies, recurrent infections, unsafe drinking water, and limited dietary diversity all play a role. Karnataka runs multiple schemes: Anna Bhagya for household food security, Matru Poorna for pregnant and lactating women, Ksheera Bhagya for milk supplementation, and Anganwadi-based supplementary nutrition that includes eggs and fortified food. The targeted Chiguru initiative seeks to identify and treat severely malnourished children in high-burden districts. But food availability alone does not guarantee nutrition. Legislators have flagged the poor quality and taste of Anganwadi food, with children often throwing it away. Nutrition that is unpalatable is nutrition wasted. Equally troubling is the weak focus on counselling mothers and families on feeding practices, hygiene, and care – interventions that cost little but yield high returns.

High levels of child stunting in Karnataka reveal gaps in food quality and maternal health support

Karnataka is among the richest states with the highest per capita income. Yet on child nutrition, it is among the middle-to-poorer performers among large states. While it fares better than Uttar Pradesh or Bihar, it lags significantly behind Kerala and Tamil Nadu, which have shown that strong primary healthcare, maternal education, and consistent monitoring can dramatically reduce stunting. The solution does not lie in announcing new schemes alone. The state needs rigorous audits of food quality, universal coverage that extends beyond Anganwadis, sustained maternal nutrition support, and accountability at the district level. Karnataka prides itself on its economic growth. But wealth without wellness is not progress; it is a failure of the most fundamental duty of governance.

FINANCE COMMISSION REPORT

Equity, merit and the balance of fiscal federalism

The GDP-contribution criterion shifts focus towards states' performance, raising questions on equalisation

AJIT RANADE

India's fiscal federalism runs on a deceptively simple bargain: the Union collects most broad-based taxes, while the states carry the front-line responsibility for essential public services – schools, hospitals, policing, local roads, water supply, and much else. The tax revenues and spending duties do not match. Indeed, states have two-thirds of expenditure obligations, but have control over only one-third of the revenues. Hence, the Constitution created a neutral referee – the Finance Commission (FC) – to periodically recommend how the "divisible pool" of Central taxes should be shared between the Union and the states (vertical devolution) and among the states (horizontal devolution).

The Commission is reconstituted every five years, so that the division formula can adapt to changing realities. Its core job follows from Article 280 and the implementation of recommendations from Article 281. In practice, FC awards become the financial "operating system" of Indian federalism. They affect the monthly cash states receive, their budget space for welfare and capital spending, and even their ability to borrow.

With the 16th Finance Commission (FC-16) report now accepted by the Union government and placed before Parliament, the new formula will shape Centre-state fiscal relations for 2026-31. The key question is not just "who gets how much," but what incentives the system creates – especially in a federation where prosperity and political power are unevenly distributed.

FC-16 has retained the states' share at 41% of the divisible pool. There was a demand from 22 states to increase this to 50% – partly due to their grievance concerning the trend of the Union's rising reliance on cesses and surcharges, which typically sit outside the divisible pool and therefore are not shared. As per the FC-16 report, since the total size of the divisible pool will nearly double from 55 trillion to 90 trillion rupees during the FC-16 period, the states will have considerably more resources. But if the Union continues to expand non-shareable levies, the "41%" can feel smaller in effect than in headline.

The most striking innovation is on the horizontal side: FC-16 introduces "contribution to national GDP" as a criterion with 10% weight. The Commission does this by reducing weights elsewhere – cutting per capita income distance and demographic performance by 2.5 percentage points each, trimming area by 5 percentage points, and removing the (small) tax effort weight used by FC-15. It is as if the Commission now seeks a balance between its central role of "gap-filling" of resource shortfall, with a new reward for states that contribute more to the national output.

Why is this a big deal? Because it shifts the moral language of transfers. For decades, the dominant logic was: help states provide comparable basic services, despite differences in income and capacity, and offset structural disadvantages. Economists call this "equalisation". The new GDP-contribution criterion says, in effect, performance and contribution also matter. This is not really contrary to the spirit of the Constitution, but the change in emphasis is path-breaking. Constitutionally, the Commission is to recommend a fair distribution of shareable taxes so that different levels of government can discharge responsibilities. The FC has always mixed criteria – some anchored in equity (income distance, population, area, forest) and some trying to recognise efficiency (tax effort, fiscal discipline, demographic performance).

So adding "contribution to GDP" is not automatically unconstitutional. The deeper question is normative: what should be the dominant objective of tax devolution? Introducing GDP contribution can conflict with the revenue-disability logic. Besides, states are not on a level playing field. A rich state often has better infrastructure and institutions that make it easier to respond to "performance incentives", while a poorer state may not be able to do so quickly. Some so-called backward states are incentivised to keep their forest cover and slow down urbanisation, thereby causing slower GDP growth. So, rewarding "contribution" can harden advantages, unless compensated by investment in capacity and human capital in the lagging states.

Returns and risks

The FC-16 report emphasises that equalisation remains the "centre of gravity", with per-capita income distance still dominant. But incentives matter because they influence political narratives and administrative choices. There are three possible behavioural effects. First, high-performing states will feel less penalised. This may reduce resentment in parts of the South and West. Second, lagging states may face weaker "gap-filling" comfort and push harder for other compensations – special packages, centrally sponsored schemes, or discretionary grants. Third, the conversation may shift from "need" to "merit". This is politically potent and risky for cooperative federalism, since poorer regions will believe that the system doesn't provide safety nets anymore.

The political centre-of-gravity is in the North and East, whereas the economic weight is more in the South. This structural imbalance cannot be addressed by the FC-16 alone. But given the sensitivities, any change in formula becomes a proxy for larger anxieties: representation, voice, and fairness.

The other issue of increasing dependence on non-shareable levies like cesses and surcharges is still unresolved. Additionally, the surplus transfer from the Reserve Bank of India, budgeted at Rs 3.1 trillion for the next fiscal, is almost 10% of Union revenues; it is non-shareable and is on a rising trend.

FC-16 nudges India's fiscal federalism away from a pure "gap-filling" narrative towards a mixed model that also acknowledges contribution and growth. To some extent, it prevents fiscal bargaining between the Union and states from becoming a permanent political tug-of-war. But its legitimacy depends on fair and transparent rules, and certainly not encouraging stealth through non-shareable levies. India needs both: a credible equalisation system so every citizen can access minimum quality public services regardless of birthplace, and a governance culture that rewards growth, reforms, and revenue effort without locking poorer states into permanent dependence.

If that balance fails, we will not just argue about percentages – we will argue about the very idea of cooperative federalism.

(The writer is an economist; Syndicate: The Billion Press)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Between the button and the *belan*

For those juggling work and home, convenience has its own value

ADARSHA SRINATH

The *roti*, the humble Indian flatbread, is my all-time favourite food. Soft, warm and fresh off the pan, it is comfort in its simplest form. Yet, as much as I love eating *rotis*, I have always disliked the laborious process behind them—kneading dough, rolling each ball with a *belan*, standing over the stove and repeating the ritual daily. In an age where a button can summon a cab, groceries or even a conversation, I often wondered: could a machine also make *rotis* without human effort?

That question led me down an Internet rabbit hole and eventually to an automated appliance promising exactly that. The videos were persuasive, the reviews glowing. Only the price gave me pause. I insisted we ignore the cost and take the plunge. When the machine finally arrived, I greeted it with more excitement than I care to admit.

The initial days involved trial, error and long calls with customer support, but once it settled into rhythm, it worked almost magically. With ingredients from my own pantry and very little oil or water, evenly sized *rotis* began to appear at the push of a button. For a household trying to eat healthier, that felt like a small victory. The appliance connected to Wi-Fi, updated itself and even prompted cleaning routines.

There was also a sense of relief. Cleaning was manageable, most parts were dishwasher-safe, and the monthly maintenance cycle ran automatically. What used to take time and effort now required only a few taps. My family enjoyed fresh *rotis* without the usual rush, and I found myself with a little more time and a little less resentment towards the kitchen.

When I excitedly described this technological marvel to my mother, she listened patiently before offering a gentle counterpoint. "No matter how advanced machines become," she said, "they cannot replace the human touch. Food carries the taste of love." She spoke of kneading dough by hand, of the rhythm and exercise it provides, of intuition built through years of practice. A machine, she argued, cannot replicate that joy.

She was not wrong. There is something deeply human about cooking with one's hands—about the textures, smells and small improvisations that machines cannot imitate. And yet, for many of us juggling work, health and daily responsibilities, convenience has its own value. Technology does not have to replace tradition; they can coexist.

I am not promoting any particular product. Rather, I am appreciating the quiet ways in which innovation can lighten everyday burdens. For generations, we have heard that chutney tastes better when ground on a stone, that food cooked over firewood has a special flavour. Perhaps that is true. But over time, we have also accepted the mixer-grinder and the gas stove. The push-button *roti* may simply be the next step in that evolution.

Ultimately, food prepared with care—whether by hand or with the help of a machine—can nourish both body and spirit. If technology allows a few tired hands to rest while still feeding a family warm *rotis*, that too has its own kind of love.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Singing Vande Mataram in full a misguided imposition

This refers to your editorial 'Pluralism hits an off-key note' (Feb 17).While it discusses the government's directive to sing all six stanzas of the national song Vande Mataram at public functions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's claim that Jawaharlal Nehru dropped four stanzas under pressure from Jinnah is misleading. The decision was taken by the Congress party on the recommendation of stalwarts like Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhi, and Sardar Patel. This imposition of the full song seems to be a political move to serve the government's agenda, rather than a genuine attempt to promote national unity. The experience of making the national anthem compulsory in cinema theatres decades ago should serve as a lesson. It was found impracticable and was eventually done away with. The government should reconsider its decision.
M Basavaraj, Davanagere

A crown of thorns

Chairman of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Tarique Rahman, who has assumed charge as the new prime minister of Bangladesh after his party swept the polls, faces significant challenges, including reviving voter confidence, addressing corruption and unemployment, and improving the economy. Bilateral relations with India are also a concern, given the current state of affairs. Rahman will have to prioritise domestic issues and take a pragmatic approach to address the country's problems.
C V Aravind, Bengaluru

Students need support

Apropos 'Missing Bengaluru student found dead in California' (Feb 16), the tragic death of a young Bengaluru student in California is not just an isolated loss but a stark reminder of the fragile mental health support systems available for students abroad. Universities and governments must treat international student welfare as a continuous responsibility and provide proactive counselling, peer monitoring, and crisis response frameworks.
Vanya Chhabra, Bengaluru

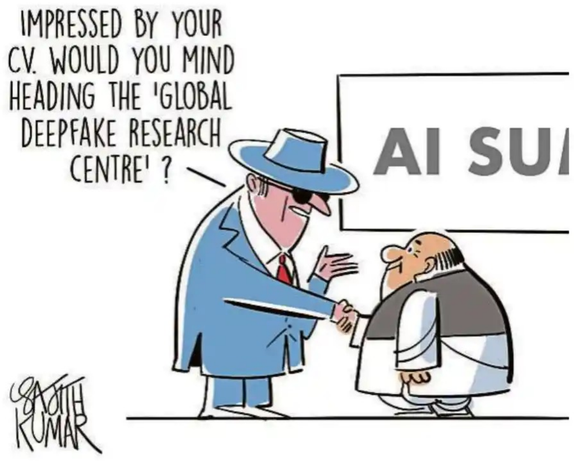
Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

There will be the sale of all meat except beef under the BJP regime.
Samik Bhattacharya, West Bengal BJP president

Control through the illusion of choice.
Steven Magee

TO BE PRECISE



IN PERSPECTIVE

Campus dreams, gig work realities

Struggling to meet expenses, many Indian students in Germany find themselves trapped in low-paying jobs

K M RAKESH

A question that deserves the right solutions in the near future is why at least a small section of Germany's private higher education network has become a veritable trap for hundreds of Indian students, many of whom leave their careers to seek foreign business management degrees by breaking their banks.

A sight that has become so unmissable, especially in big cities like Berlin, is young South Asian boys, the majority of them Indians, criss-crossing streets and alleys on electric bicycles to deliver food, braving even the freezing winter. According to DAAD India, a branch of the German student exchange service, the number of Indian students doubled in five years to about 60,000 in 2024. On the flip side, this has contributed significantly to the part-time job market.

The conditions that force them to take up such low-paid jobs as delivery riders are quite paradoxical to the fact that Indians earn the highest salaries in Germany, around €1,200 more than the €4,177 median salary of Germans. But these high-paid professionals are mostly in the MINT sectors – mathematics, IT, natural sciences, and technology, including core engineering. The majority of these MINT sector workers are either graduates from German universities, mostly public universities, or overseas recruits with excellent career records.

Several public universities offer world-class education at negligible fees, but have a high entry barrier. On the other hand, private universities that offer courses in business studies, data sciences, and other New Age subjects are more accessible. Many of them seek just 50% marks in qualifying degrees from any foreign university and an IELTS score of around 6.5. Thus, the private universities whose courses get amplified in source markets like India through education consultancies, media advertisements, and social media, become a major attraction for those seeking a foreign degree.

But the catch is the high fees, for which foreign students usually fund their studies through huge bank loans from their home countries. The issuance of visas is conditional on this amount being deposited in blocked accounts in Germany to ensure the applicants are adequately funded for their upkeep. The basic expenditure the banks release to students from their blocked accounts is usually less than €1,000, hardly enough to meet spiralling house rents and living costs. Part-time jobs – called mini jobs and midi jobs – become the only resource to fill this gap.

Strapped with a sluggish economy, mass layoffs, surplus supply in the job market, and the mandatory requirement of at least C1 proficiency (scaled A1 to C2) in German language for most jobs, part-timers become sitting ducks for the low-paid gig economy with no language barrier. Food delivery aggregators usually limit hiring to permanent positions and rely on subcontractors who hire delivery riders. The result is gross exploitation.

Opportunities with rights

Although the European Union has rules guaranteeing gig workers' rights, a majority of delivery executives work without proper contracts. They sign up through WhatsApp numbers of faceless subcontractors who often pay them cash and keep them on a tight leash under the threat of delisting them at will. As one delivery executive said, they end up working 10-12 hours a day in these "mini jobs", compromising on the very purpose of enrolling in universities here. While they earn an average of €70 for the day's work, the work leaves them too tired to focus on their studies.

Some of them even land in the wrong institutions, as nearly 300 Indian students discovered the hard way late last year at one Berlin-based private university where they enrolled for business management studies by paying high fees. They were served with deportation notices since the university lacked proper accreditation and didn't even have enough teachers. It's not clear how many managed to stay on.

The recent India-EU free trade agreement that EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen described as the "mother of all deals" is expected to increase opportunities for highly skilled Indian workers in Europe, which desperately needs qualified hands in almost all sectors. But it's a tough call to make on whether opportunities alone can help Indian students who land in such traps designed by greedy middlemen and subcontractors.

A region known for its strong trade unions that often flex their muscles to bring entire nations to their knees, the only recourse for these hapless students-turned-gig workers is the collectives that have begun to take up their cause and protect their rights and dreams of a foreign degree and a better life.

(The writer is a senior journalist based in Berlin)

Ritual, nation, and the politics of belonging

ISMAIL SALAHUDDIN

The Ministry of Home Affairs' January 28 notification directing that all six stanzas of Vande Mataram be sung at official functions has revived an old, unresolved question in Indian public life. This is not a routine administrative guideline. It is a political decision with deep constitutional, ethical, and religious consequences. By turning a historically contested song into a compulsory State ritual, the government has crossed a boundary that the freedom movement and the makers of the Constitution had consciously chosen not to cross.

At the heart of this controversy lies a simple but serious question: can the State compel citizens to participate in a cultural and religiously coded performance in the name of patriotism? For many Indians, especially Muslims, the answer is no. This refusal is not rooted in hostility to the nation but fidelity to the Constitution, freedom of conscience, and the secular promise of the Republic. Patriotism cannot be reduced to ritual obedience, particularly when that ritual conflicts with religious belief.

The debate around Vande Mataram is not new. During the freedom struggle, leaders were aware of the song's limits as a national symbol. The Constituent Assembly recognised that the song, composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and drawn from his novel *Anandamath*, carried imagery unacceptable to some. Rabindranath Tagore advised that only the first two stanzas, which describe the land without invoking religious imagery, be used, and even then voluntarily. This position reflected ethical clarity: the nation could not be built by imposing the cultural beliefs of the majority on everyone else.

By insisting on the full six-stanza recital, the present government discards this historical consensus. The later stanzas imagine the motherland as a goddess and invoke religious imagery associated with Durga and other deities. For Muslims, whose faith rests on strict monotheism and the rejection of associating partners with God, this creates a direct conflict. Islam does not permit acts resembling worship of any being other than God. A State directive forcing participation in such a ritual strikes at the freedom of religion guaranteed under Article 25.

Muslim organisations, civil rights groups, and social activists therefore opposed the guidelines. Their objection is constitutional and ethical. Muslims worship one God without partners; symbolic submission to religious imagery violates their faith.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed that no individual can be compelled to sing Vande Mataram or the national anthem if it violates their conscience. A constitutional State cannot selectively forget these judgments.

To understand why this issue persists, one must return to the origins of the song. Vande Mataram comes from *Anandamath*, a late nineteenth-century novel written under colonial rule. The text imagines the nation as a sacred mother defended by ascetic warriors engaged in violent struggle. While celebrated as anti-colonial literature, *Anandamath* defines the nation through deeply Hindu symbols and excludes Muslims from its moral universe. Scholars such as Partha Chatterjee and Sumanta Banerjee have shown that Bankim's nationalism was cultural and religious rather than civic and inclusive.

Symbols do not remain confined to history. When a song born of such imagination becomes a test of loyalty, it carries its exclusions into the present. The demand to sing Vande Mataram, especially in its complete form, becomes a way of marking who belongs fully and who does not. Muslims, Christians, and other minorities are placed in an impossible position: violate conscience or risk being labelled anti-national. This is not unity; it is moral pressure enforced by State authority.

The current push by the BJP and its ideological allies must be seen in this context. It is part of a project to redefine Indian identity in majoritarian terms. Cultural symbols become political tools, and disagreements are recast as disloyalty.

India's Constitution was crafted precisely to prevent this outcome. Articles 19 and 25 protect freedom of expression and conscience. Jawaharlal Nehru and other framers understood that the nation could survive disagreement but not enforced uniformity. That is why Vande Mataram was never declared the national anthem or made compulsory.

The new guidelines abandon this wisdom and privilege majoritarian sentiment over minority rights.

The danger lies not only in the directive but in what it normalises. For decades, Vande Mataram has been taught and performed without serious engagement with its historical limits. Once the State mandates its performance, what was voluntary becomes obligatory, and dissent begins to look like deviance.

The January 28 notification should therefore concern all who value constitutional democracy. The question is not whether Vande Mataram is a powerful song or an important historical text. The real question is whether the State has the authority to compel belief and symbolic submission. History, law, and ethics suggest that it does not.

Resisting compulsory patriotism is not an act of disloyalty. It is a defence of a deeper idea of India. A democracy is not strengthened when everyone is forced to sing the same song. It is strengthened when people with different beliefs can live together without fear or humiliation, under a constitution that treats them as equals.

(The writer is a researcher and columnist based in Delhi and Kolkata. His work explores Muslim identity, communal politics, caste, and the politics of knowledge)

In the aftermath of another wave of anti-government unrest, Iran is gripped by a mood of collective grief and uncertainty about the future

FARNAZ FASSIHI AND LEILY NIKOUNAZAR

Protests demanding the ouster of Iran's authoritarian clerical rulers have ended. But government's continuing crackdown and arrests of dissidents have contributed to the sense that the standoff is not yet over. NYT

Iran's protests have ended, but the anger and pain have not

Teachers talk about slain students and cry during recess. College students are boycotting final exams in honour of fallen classmates. Young men and women say they are struggling with survivor's guilt.

Mariam, a 54-year-old designer, said she panics whenever her teenage son leaves the house because he had friends and classmates who were shot and killed in the protests.

"The truth is that we are feeling extremely not well," she said. "I have never experienced this kind of collective grief and instability. We don't know what will happen in the next hour." Like many people interviewed for this article, Mariam asked to be identified by only her first name for fear of retribution.

Protests demanding the ouster of Iran's authoritarian clerical rulers have ended. But many Iranians say that feelings of rage against the government and anxiety about the future permeate all aspects of life, and that nothing feels normal anymore.

The government's continuing crackdown and arrests of dissidents, including prominent political figures in the reformist faction, contribute to the sense that the standoff is not yet over.

While Iran's leaders struggle to suppress the dissent at home, they are facing pressure beyond their borders. US President Donald Trump has been building up US warships in the waters near Iran, ready to potentially strike if ongoing talks between Washington and Tehran do not lead to a deal to limit Iran's nuclear and military capabilities.

Teachers say they and their students alike are traumatised. Nafiseh, a 35-year-old high school teacher in the capital, Tehran, said that during recess, she and other teachers discuss the uprising and cry.

"The students are extremely distracted and frightened," she said, adding: "At the slightest sound of an ambulance siren or an airplane, they tremble with fear."

Iran's government has blamed the killings on terrorist cells linked to the United States and Israel. It claims that armed operators infiltrated the protests, necessitating the government's militarised response, and that the terrorists killed many of the protesters.

But more than 100 videos and images, verified by *The New York Times*, show the breadth of the government's violence, including videos of security forces in uniform and on motorcycles firing directly at unarmed protesters.

The government said that about 3,400 people were killed, among them 200 children and minors and 100 college students, and at least 500 security officers.

Rights groups like US-based HRANA say at least 7,000 protesters were killed, and the numbers are expected to rise as more deaths are verified.

The large number of deaths, most over the span of three nights in early January — amounting to the deadliest unrest in Iran's modern history, according to rights groups and a historian — has left many Iranians shocked.

Some therapists say they are offering free online workshops to help people cope.

Psychologists said their patients are displaying chronic anxiety, and deep anger and mistrust.

"In recent weeks, the emotional atmosphere in Iran has changed dramatically," Bita Bavadi, a psychologist in Tehran, said in an email. "In my clinical work, I observe an intense mixture of anger, fear, helplessness, and unprocessed collective grief."

The threat of war with the United States, which has deployed naval war ships near Iran's territorial waters, is adding another layer of uncertainty.

Trump has said that if Iran does not agree to a deal that would suspend its nuclear programme and limit the range of its missiles, he would consider strikes on the country. He has also said that regime change in Iran would be beneficial.

Iranians, both supporters and opponents of the government, openly ponder a war waged by the United States and whether the regime and its supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, would survive.

"The priorities of the people are different from the priorities of their rulers," Mohamad Renany, a cleric who has spoken out against the government's crackdowns on protesters, said on social media.

"When the people's priority is bread, and the regime's priority is political ideologies and extreme interpretations of its own beliefs, a serious confrontation arises between the people and the regime," he added.

Some Iranians say that they are so angry and hopeless about change from within that they favour US military intervention to free them from this regime.

Others say they oppose war because it could lead to even more instability, displacement and violence.

Kamran, a 49-year-old businessperson, said the violence he had witnessed during the protests had altered his views on war.

"After the massacre many of us feel we are prey in the hands of a predator, not people living under a government's rule," he said. "So our eyes are to the sky, hoping bombs will kill them, and Iran will be free."

Elaheh, a 52-year-old from Tehran, said in an interview that although she opposed the clerical rulers, she was against foreign military interference and did not believe democracy would come with bombs.

"We have enough problems," she said. "We cannot endure a war that may destroy our infrastructure, divide our country and kill even more people."

Iran's economy, already in a dire state because of international sanctions and corruption, has taken more blows since the uprising began in late December. The currency has been in free fall, and the government's shutdown of the Internet has impaired commerce.

Reza Alefnasb, the head of the union for e-commerce workers, told Iranian media that those who make their living online had experienced an 80% drop in income. He also said that the combination of continued disruptions to the Internet and uncertainty about the war was making Iranians spend less on nonessentials.

Sattar Hashemi, the telecommunications minister, told Iranian media last week that the losses from digital business amounted to $3 million a day and the country's economy as a whole was losing $35 million per day since the uprising.

Many small-business owners who specialise in handicraft, baking, fashion and music took to social media last week pleading with people to make purchases so they could stay afloat. Some of them said that they had suspended working out of respect of the protesters killed but added that this is also not sustainable.

Reza Badri works as an accountant at a furniture store. He said in an interview that sales had come to a near halt for the past month and the owners were laying off workers and downsizing production. In a post on social media, he asked whether anyone could put him in touch with exporters outside of Iran.

"The killing of so many of my countrymen, many of them my own age, and the sky-high prices are wearing us out mentally, emotionally and physically," Badri said in the interview.

Sephideh, 35, an English teacher in Tehran, said in an interview that her virtual classes have been completely cancelled because of Internet disruptions and she has not had an income in more than a month.

"I cry almost every day and feel like I'm in the most vulnerable state possible," she said. "At the same time, I also feel anger."

The New York Times

Stablecoins: Promise and peril for India

VASANT G HEGDE

Cryptocurrencies have been in the news for close to two decades, with Bitcoin the most prominent. Questions about whether they can function as money – as a medium of exchange – and whether they should be regulated are routinely debated by academicians and policymakers. For any instrument to serve as money, it must command trust in economic transactions and carry the backing of a central bank — in other words, be legal tender. Cryptocurrencies meet neither condition. They lack the trust of the users and central bank backing. At best, they are traded like speculative assets, their prices swinging wildly. Even calling them assets is contentious, as they lack intrinsic value like gold or the valuation framework of stocks. The search for a stable, non-volatile digital currency pegged to reserves or backed by a central bank has therefore persisted.

The global financial landscape shifted with the passage of the GENIUS Act (Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for US Stablecoins) in the United States in July 2025—the first comprehensive federal framework for stablecoins. The Act, which aims to position the US as a crypto capital of the world, mandates that every stablecoin be backed by an equivalent amount of high-quality liquid assets such as US dollars, Treasury bills, or central bank reserves. Algorithmic stablecoins that rely on code rather than cash are barred from being labelled "payment stablecoins". Only banks and approved non-bank financial institutions—called 'Permitted Payment Stablecoin Issuers'—can issue them. Issuers must publish monthly, third-party verified audited reports of their reserves, eliminating mere "trust us, we have the money" assurances. Compliance with the Bank Secrecy Act is mandatory, including safeguards against money laundering and terror financing. Among popular US stablecoins are USDC (USD Coin) and USDT (USD Tether), with USDC generally viewed as more transparent due to regular audits. Both combine blockchain speed with the price stability of fiat currency.

In Europe, the Markets in Crypto-Assets (MICA) regulation, passed in 2024, provides a framework for e-money tokens (EMTs) and asset-referenced tokens (ARTs). An issuer authorised in one EU country can operate across all 27 member states, offering significant advantages for scaling businesses. Crypto companies must publish a white paper outlining risks, technology, and rights of the holder. In Asia, Hong Kong passed the Stablecoin Ordinance in May 2025. In China, the State media has called for yuan-backed digital currencies to be pursued "sooner rather than later". There are concerns that the dollar-backed stablecoins could lead to further weaponisation of the dollar.

How do these developments worldwide impact India? For India—a global leader in digital payments and remittances—stablecoins present a complex paradox: a massive opportunity for economic efficiency balanced against a potential threat to monetary sovereignty. For Indians remitting money into the country, it could mean a significant cost reduction from the existing 5 to 6% owing to high mark-up fees and transaction fees to around 1%. The other advantage is the speed with which funds can be transferred. While the settlement of funds through traditional banking through SWIFT takes a few business days, transferring funds through stablecoins through Blockchain takes just a few minutes. The transfers can also be done 24/7 in contrast to banking channels, which operate only during banking hours. For exporters, especially MSMEs, lower wire transfer costs and real-time settlement could ease cash flow pressures.

India has introduced a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) in response to stablecoins. CBDC can be used in interbank settlements and G-secs and person-to-merchant payments. However, the RBI's *Financial Stability Report* (December 2025) cautions that embracing stablecoins may weaken the rupee's role and undermine the RBI's ability to control inflation and manage monetary policy. Stablecoins provide an easy, often unregulated, exit route for capital, making it harder for India to manage its foreign exchange reserves.

The future of India's economy depends on how it embraces the stablecoins without compromising on monetary sovereignty and financial stability and on whether it can harness the efficiency of these digital rails without losing the "anchor" of the rupee.

(The writer is a CFA and a former banker. He currently trains young bankers at Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Bengaluru)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: FEBRUARY 1976

South must accept Hindi: Jatti

Bangalore, Feb. 17
Vice-President B. D. Jatti today advised South Indians to accept Hindi as the national language. There was no opposition for Hindi in Karnataka, but only a section in South India felt that Hindi was being imposed, he said. All should accept Hindi as a national language in the larger interests of the country, he said. Mr. Jatti, who was speaking at a function after laying the foundation-stone of the Mangilal Gotawat Hindi Junior College building, here, said that the national language, the national flag and a national character were the basic needs of any nation.

25 YEARS AGO: FEBRUARY 2001

Militancy and ceasefire can't go together: PM

Mumbai, Feb 17
Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee today said a decision on extending ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir beyond the expiry of the current truce on February 26 would be taken at a meeting of Cabinet Committee on Security convened in Delhi tomorrow. The meeting will be attended by Home Minister L K Advani, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, Defence Minister George Fernandes and Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha. "Militancy and ceasefire cannot go hand in hand," he reiterated.

OASIS | SUDHA DEVI NAYAK

Understanding the power of yes

'Yes' is affirmative action. It is embracing positivity, opening yourself to endless possibilities, living life more meaningfully and forging stronger relationships. When we say 'yes' we are more confident, full of conviction and faith in our values and beliefs .Often in life we are faced with the dilemma of saying 'yes' to a proposition we are totally unsure of. Saying 'yes' would mean putting yourself out to extend a helping hand to fellow human beings, empathise with their situation and share the pain and travail they are going through. It would mean stepping out of your comfort zone, making commitments and taking on obligations , that may call for an amount of sacrifice and even the risk of failure.

But if your intuitive capacity is right and yes springs from compassion and conviction yes is right. . A chance encounter can turn into a rewarding connection, a chance gesture of goodwill can give you great dividends of joy and fulfilment, if we don't stint on your good impulses. Some of the most memorable moments of life flow from connection. Great minds have given rise to great literature, great art, path breaking discoveries and humanitarian service which would never have been possible but for saying 'yes' weighing the pros and cons of a toss-up between passion and run of the mill livelihood .

Saying 'yes' when all others are looking away is not a choice but a moral imperative , a realisation of being fully human, overcoming our fear of failure and limiting beliefs. The *Bhagavad Gita* says it is our duty to stand for the right and protect the vulnerable, *dharma* that aligns with cosmic order. *Yato dharmastato jayah* (Where there is *dharma* there is victory).

The power of yes is a transformative, faith driven response to God's calling, moving us from hesitation to obedience and unlocking purpose and blessing. It is to overcome fear and inadequacy as when someone jumps into a river to rescue a drowning child on the impulse of a moment without forethought. We do not recognise our capabilities until they are proved beyond doubt, without our even knowing. The Persian poet Hafiz says, *I wish I could show you /when you are lonely and in darkness/the astonishing light /of your own being!*

Saying 'yes' is not a given when we feel manipulated or coerced, the purpose should recommend itself to your conscience before you champion the cause wholeheartedly.

Union minister hints at J&K statehood restoration

SRINAGAR, DHNS: Union Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal on Tuesday said that Jammu and Kashmir would regain statehood "very soon", drawing a cautious but hopeful response from Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who said the people would feel fully satisfied only when the promise is implemented.

After attending a function at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) here, Meghwal told reporters that the issue was "very sensitive" but reiterated that the Centre was committed to restoring statehood. Referring to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, he said assurances had already been given in the Lok Sabha.

"Our Home Minister has said in Parliament that Jammu and Kashmir will get its statehood. There is a process for it. I think you will soon hear about a decision," Meghwal said, without specifying a timeline.

Reacting to the remarks, Omar said he had heard that "good news" might be forthcoming but stressed that expectations had been building for some time.

"It has been one and a half years of wait. We hope we do not have to wait much longer," he said.

The chief minister added that discussions with the Centre were ongoing, though the process had taken longer than anticipated.

HC quashes Kerala govt's household survey programme

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: On Tuesday, the Kerala High Court quashed a state government directive regarding the 'Nava Keralam—Citizens Response Programme,' marking another setback for the Left Front government's purported pre-election exercise.

The Pinarayi Vijayan government launched the programme on January 1 to collect citizen feedback on current development and welfare schemes.

But the Opposition Congress-led United Democratic Front termed it a political campaign of the Left Front ahead of the Assembly polls.

A bench of Chief Justice Soumen Sen and Justice Syam Kumar V M said the costs associated with carrying out this program breach established business regulations.

'AI a force-multiplier': PM rejects fears of massive job losses

Says it will create new opportunities, boost economy

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Visitors explore AI platforms at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi on Tuesday. REUTERS

NEW AVENUES

- PM says digital transformation will redefine work
- Says India to be top AI superpower by 2047
- PM insists preparation is antidote to fear, calls AI transformative for Viksit Bharat

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday dismissed apprehensions of massive job losses due to the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), stating that while some existing jobs may be "redefined", digital transformation will also lead to the creation of new tech jobs, further boosting the Indian economy.

In an interview with a news agency, the prime minister emphasised that preparation is the best antidote to fear. Modi described AI as a transformative opportunity in India's journey towards Viksit Bharat-2047.

He reiterated his vision for India to rank among the world's top three AI superpowers, driven by innovation, sovereignty, and inclusivity.

"India's IT sector has been the backbone of our services exports and a key driver of economic growth. AI presents both a tremendous opportunity and a challenge for this sector," he said.

He noted that AI market projections indicate India's IT sector could reach $400 billion by 2030, fuelled by new waves of AI-enabled outsourcing and domain-specific automation.

While general-purpose AI tools have become widespread, enterprise-grade AI adoption remains concentrated in specific sectors, and incumbent IT firms continue to play crucial roles in solving complex business problems.

Skilling & re-skilling

Modi highlighted the central government's focus on skilling and re-skilling the workforce to prepare them for an AI-driven future. "I view AI as a force-multiplier which will further help us push the boundaries of what we thought possible," he said.

He pointed out that history has consistently shown that work does not disappear due to technology—its nature simply changes, and new types of jobs are created.

Insisting that India is already well-equipped to adapt to this change, Modi said, "Combining innovation with inclusion, we are confident that AI will strengthen India's workforce. With the right skills and preparation, our youth will lead the future of work."

"Our AI models will be deployed worldwide, serving billions in their native languages. Our AI startups will be valued in hundreds of billions, creating millions of high-quality jobs. Our AI-powered public services will be studied globally as benchmarks for efficient, equitable governance. And most importantly, every Indian will experience AI as an enabler of opportunity, a multiplier of capability, and a servant of human dignity, not as a threat to their livelihood or an instrument of control," he added.

Private sector drives a quarter of defence output: Rajnath

H125 helicopter assembly line unveiled at Vemagal

MAHESH KULKARNI
VEMAGAL (KOLAR), DHNS

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the H125 Final Assembly Line at Vemagal on Tuesday. DH PHOTO

In a major shift from the country's historically public sector-dominated defence equipment manufacturing model, the private sector in India today accounts for a quarter of total defence production, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday.

Speaking after inaugurating the Tata Advanced Systems' Final Assembly Line for the Airbus H125 Helicopter in India at Vemagal in Kolar district, Singh said India's defence manufacturing ecosystem has undergone a structural transformation over the past decade following reforms initiated by the Narendra Modi government. This resulted in the private sector entering defence production. "The government is committed to supporting the Indian industry to meet local demand and export to overseas markets," Singh said.

"Historically, the defence production was in the hands of the public sector companies in India. After the reforms carried out by the Modi government, such as corporatisation of ordnance factories, liberalised industrial licensing, and policy support, the private sector now accounts for one-fourth of the defence production," Singh added.

The government has also supported micro, small and medium enterprises, and over 16,000 units are now supplying components to foreign companies, he said.

The defence minister said that the setting up of a final assembly line for H125 helicopters by Tata Advanced Systems jointly with Airbus is a classic example of India-France defence cooperation.

Referring to the H125 helicopter programme, he said the investment into the facility exceeds Rs 1,000 crore (Euro 100 million) and generates substantial direct and indirect employment opportunities for India's skilled workers. The H125 helicopter is globally recognised for its reliability, versatility and performance in diverse operating conditions.

Speaking on the occasion, French Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs, Catherine Vautrin, said the project between Tata and Airbus demonstrates how France's technological excellence and India's strength can come together to build advanced aerospace capabilities.

Union Minister of Civil Aviation Ram Mohan Naidu and Karnataka Large and Medium Industries Minister MB Patil were present on the occasion.

Facility to build 500 H125 helicopters

The H125 helicopter Final Assembly Line facility was jointly inaugurated virtually by PM Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron.

The facility will manufacture 500 helicopters over the next 20 years. To begin with, it will assemble the civilian variant, the H125. The military version, the H125M, will also be assembled as and when orders are received from defence or government establishments, said Sukaran Singh, CEO & MD of Tata Advanced Systems.

The partnership marks the first time the Indian private sector will undertake the manufacturing, integration, testing and maintenance of a sophisticated rotary-wing platform in India.

The H125 is the only helicopter to have landed on the summit of Mount Everest, giving it a performance ceiling that exceeds existing light utility fleets.

NCP seeks CBI probe into Baramati crash

MUMBAI, DHNS: Nearly three weeks after Maharashtra's deputy chief minister and NCP chief Ajit Pawar died in a plane crash in Baramati, his party has demanded a CBI probe even as the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) said that since the Black Box has suffered damage because of fire and resultant heat the agency has sought "specialised support" to retrieve data.

The January 28 crash claimed five lives, including Maharashtra's deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar.

An NCP delegation, including Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar, her son Parth Pawar, party working president Praful Patel, called on Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who is also the state home minister, and submitted a memorandum.

The demands for a CBI probe came at a time when questions about the crash had earlier been raised by Ajit's nephew Rohit Pawar, who is an NCP (SP) MLA. He had highlighted the slow pace of the investigation, alleging possible negligence and regulatory failures by Delhi-based VSR Ventures.

After the crash, the Ministry of Civil Aviation ordered a probe by DGCA and AAIB.

Row erupts over Gates' presence at AI summit

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The participation of Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, who was named in the Epstein files, at the 'India AI Impact Summit' became a subject of speculation on Tuesday after government sources claimed he would not attend, while his foundation contradicted the claim.

Bill Gates

The Congress was quick to target the Modi government over the episode, questioning why the government had not officially clarified his participation and whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi was "scared" of the American because of the Epstein files.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who is leading the summit, did not provide a direct reply to questions raised at a press conference. "I forget, like many other things, regarding who's attending, who's not attending... That is personal choices which people make... I need not comment on that," Vaishnaw said, even as he spoke in detail about why Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang had skipped the summit.

Questions have been raised about Gates' participation in the event after MPs such as Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Priyanka Chaturvedi questioned his presence at the international event over his name cropping up in the Epstein files.

A PTI report earlier in the day quoted government sources as saying that Gates would not attend the summit, even as reports and posts on X by some journalists suggested that his name figures in the Epstein files and could create discomfort. Sources also indicated that the government stood by Epstein's victims.

However, the Gates Foundation told PTI, "Bill Gates is attending the AI Impact Summit. He will be delivering his keynote as scheduled." He was listed as a keynote speaker on February 19 and given a 12-minute speaking slot at 11.50 am.

Congress Media and Publicity Department Chairman Pawan Khera targeted the Modi government. "Government sources are saying Bill Gates will not come... while Bill Gates himself is saying that I will come to the summit and deliver a speech."

"Who are these sources? These sources say that the government stands with the survivors. It is good, but why can't they say it on record? The Prime Minister himself should have said that. Why is he scared?" Khera said.

Referring to the Gates Foundation statement, Chaturvedi said, "If true, what a shame? So much for leading the change."

Summit 'chaos': Kharge flays govt

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday attacked the "PR-hungry" government over the "utter chaos and rank mismanagement" at the India AI Impact Summit, claiming that the country had to suffer "global embarrassment" and urging it to learn from the Bengaluru Tech Summit on how to organise such large-scale congregations.

Mallikarjun Kharge

The first day of the summit on Monday saw attendees from India and abroad complaining about patchy mobile and internet coverage, long queues at entry points, overcrowding in hallways, limited access to basic amenities, as well as security measures for Prime Minister Narendra Modi leaving them stranded at Bharat Mandapam, where the event is being held.

Kharge said an event that could have been a showpiece AI summit for the world, demonstrating India's digital and AI capabilities, had reportedly turned into "utter chaos and rank mismanagement" under a "PR-hungry" government. He said exhibitors and visitors faced "extreme distress due to the PM gatecrashing for a photo opportunity" on the very first day.

"Exhibitors are left without food and water, their products are stolen, Digi Yatra miserably fails, laptops, personal electronic devices and even bags are prohibited, only cash instead of digital/UPI payment is accepted, and founders are made to pay huge sums without basic facilities, among many other reasons of distress," he said.

"It is extremely unfortunate that our country has to suffer this global embarrassment due to the incompetence of our own government. Perhaps the Modi government should learn from the Bengaluru Tech Summit, which is an annual feature in smoothly organising such large-scale digital and tech congregations," the Congress president posted on X.

Macron starts his Mumbai visit with morning jog

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

France's President Emmanuel Macron shakes hands with actor Anil Kapoor in Mumbai. AFP

As he landed in Mumbai for bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, French President Emmanuel Macron ensured that he maintained his fitness regime and took time out for a jog at the iconic Marine Drive and had a luncheon meeting with the who's who of the Hindi entertainment industry.

Besides, Macron, accompanied by Brigitte Marie-Claude Macron, the First Lady, also paid tributes to the victims and martyrs of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks at the Taj Mahal Palace off the Gateway of India.

This was the fourth visit of Macron to India and the first in Mumbai. Macron is in India on an invitation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with whom he held bilateral talks at the Lok Bhavan in Mumbai.

Macron landed in Mumbai past midnight, where he was welcomed by Maharashtra Governor Acharya Devvrat, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Pawar.

After a quick morning rest, he was ready for his jog in a navy blue T-shirt, black shorts, and running shoes. Blending into the crowd, he waved at surprised onlookers while his security detail followed him.

Videos of the 48-year-old jogging went viral on social media platforms.

Thereafter, Macron and the First Lady paid tributes to the 26/11 memorial inside the Taj Hotel.

"At the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai, we paid tribute to the victims of the 2008 attacks. To their families and loved ones, and to India: France stands with you in the face of terrorism, unity, and determination," the French president said.

Later in the day, a delegation of the film industry called on the visiting president over a luncheon meeting.

Among those present were Shabana Azmi, Anil Kapoor, Manoj Bajpayee, Zoya Akhtar, Richa Chadha, and Grammy-winning music composer Ricky Kej.

"Alongside legends of Indian cinema. Culture brings us together," Macron wrote on X.

After delegation-level talks with Modi, Macron said, "We have identified areas where we need to cooperate more to elevate our ties further. France and India can give a lot to the world. We have expressed co-production interest with Bollywood. I welcome the FTA between India and the European Union."

Modi, Macron share car ride

In what was an example of 'car diplomacy', Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron travelled in the same vehicle from the iconic Lok Bhavan at Malabar Hill to the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel off the Gateway of India, reports DHNS.

While travelling through the Netaji Subhas Chandra Road, also known as the Marine Drive, the two leaders engaged in private discussions.

At the Taj Hotel, the two leaders inaugurated the India-France Year of Innovation 2026.

Modi invites B'desh PM, pitches 'people-centric menu of cooperation'

NEW DELHI, PTI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has invited Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to visit India and conveyed his best wishes to the newly sworn-in Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader.

The invitation was extended to Rahman through a letter handed over by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, who called on Rahman in Dhaka after the latter took charge as the prime minister on Tuesday, officials said here.

After attending the swearing-in ceremony in Dhaka, Birla said India stands ready to support Bangladesh's endeavours to build a democratic, progressive and inclusive nation.

"Glad to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the new government of Bangladesh led by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman in Dhaka today. India stands ready to support Bangladesh's endeavours to build a democratic, progressive and inclusive nation," Birla said.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla with newly sworn-in Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman during a meeting. PTI

Bangladesh High Commissioner to India, Riaz Hamidullah, said in a post on X, "Prime Minister Tarique Rahman conveys his greetings to India and PM Narendra Modi to the visiting India Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at a courtesy meet following the swearing-in of the new government.

"Speaker Birla conveyed wishes and an invitation to India. Both leaders expressed optimism to work together for the well-being of the people of Bangladesh and India, pursuing a people-centric menu of cooperation."

Birla also met Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay and other leaders on the sidelines of the event.

Bangladesh had invited Modi to the ceremony, but the prime minister could not attend the event as he was scheduled to hold talks with French President Emmanuel Macron in Mumbai on Tuesday.

TN Cong chief warns against public comments on power-sharing

CHENNAI, PTI: TNCC chief K Selvaperunthagai on Tuesday said the Congress high command was "watching those violating" its directive to refrain from commenting on power-sharing with the DMK and would decide on the action to be taken.

As though endorsing Selvaperunthagai's stance, AICC general secretary K C Venugopal distanced himself from party MP Manickam Tagore's view on power sharing and said it did not represent the party's official position.

"It is not the party's view. It is an individual opinion. We are waiting for discussions to start with the DMK," Venugopal said after participating in a march demanding the restoration of MGNREGA.

Any decision on alliances would be made only by the party high command, he said, adding that, "We (DMK and Congress) have a great tradition of alliance on common issues to fight against fascist forces and fight against communal forces."

Earlier, responding to Tagore's demand for power sharing with the DMK, Selvaperunthagai said party members had been told not to speak about alliances in public forums.

PILGRIM BOOM

Ram Temple drives 5-fold rise in traders' income

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

Ayodhya's economy has witnessed a historic turnaround after the Ram Temple consecration, with the number of visitors reaching a whopping 11 crore in the first six months and a five-time rise in the income of the local traders.

The study titled 'The Economic Renaissance of Ayodhya, India: A Case Study on Sri Ram Mandir' by the Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow (IIM-L), has undertaken a comparative analysis of the economy of Ayodhya before and after the construction of the Ram Temple.

It said that in the first six months of the Ram Temple consecration, more than 11 crore devotees had visited Ayodhya. The income of the local traders rose five times in this period.

The rates of properties around the temple increased five to 10 times, while the real estate prices rose between 25 and 40%.

The study says that more than 150 new hotels and homestays have been built in Ayodhya, and online booking witnessed a surge of 400%.

Revenue from the taxes from tourism-related activities was likely to be between Rs 20 and 24 thousand crore, the study said, adding that the opportunities of employment in hospitality, construction, transport, and services sectors have risen sharply.

According to the study, two lakh devotees visit Ayodhya every day, giving a fillip to the hospitality and related industry. It predicted that in the next 4-5 years, around 1.2 lakh direct and indirect employments would be generated.

Supreme Court bins plea seeking guidelines on political speeches

Says petition targets individuals of particular party

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said political leaders must foster fraternity as it declined to consider a plea seeking guidelines on political speeches.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices B V Nagarathna and Joymalya Bagchi said political leaders must foster fraternity.

"Speech originates from thought. How do you control thought? We should encourage thoughts aligned with constitutional values," the bench said.

However, the court declined to entertain a plea, saying it appeared to single out select individuals of a particular political party. The court asked the petitioners to file a fresh and objective plea.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal argued for the petitioners, including academician Roop Rekha Verma.

However, the bench pointed out that the allegations seemed to target "a selectively chosen few" while ignoring others. The court said such a petition would not be acceptable and that any challenge must be objective and even-handed.

Sibal argued that the political atmosphere had become "toxic". He asked the court to frame guidelines to ensure accountability when speeches undermine fraternity, clarifying that the plea was not directed against any particular leader.

JUSTICE B V NAGARATHNA

"Suppose we lay down guidelines... Who will follow them? Origin of speech is thought. How do you control thought? We must raise thoughts in line with constitutional values.

The bench, however, said, "Of course it is against an individual, especially at this time. Withdraw this. File a simple plea on what conditional guardrails have been laid down and how political parties are violating them."

"We are inclined to entertain such a petition. We are eagerly waiting for someone with objectivity to come and file one," the bench said.

Emphasising the need for restraint on all sides, the bench questioned, "Suppose we lay down guidelines, who will follow them?"

Sibal said that while the Election Commission's Model Code of Conduct (MCC) applies during elections, speeches made before the MCC period often continue circulating on social media even after it comes into force. He also questioned the media's responsibility for amplifying such speeches and sought judicial guidelines to caution public figures.

The bench said while the court can issue orders, implementation remains a challenge.

Referring to earlier judgments, the court noted that the Supreme Court has already laid down principles concerning hate speech and free expression. "Responsibility lies with the political parties as well. He is a member of the party, a leader," the bench said.

The court declined to entertain the PIL seeking clear guidelines for politicians and the media on reporting or amplifying allegedly divisive speeches impacting fraternity and constitutional values.

On February 16 the court declined to hear petitions seeking action against the Assam Chief Minister in relation to a viral video, reinforcing the need for objectivity for filing such petitions.

Puri had 62 email exchanges & 14 meetings with Epstein: Cong

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Congress on Tuesday accused Union minister Hardeep Puri of "lying" on the 'Epstein files' issue, and asked the BJP leader to come clean on the "62 email exchanges" and "14 meetings" he had with convicted American sex offender Jeffrey Epstein between 2014 and 2017.

The Opposition party also reiterated its demand that Puri must resign immediately.

However, Puri denied all the charges.

"Between 2014 and 2017, there were 62 email exchanges between Hardeep Puri and Epstein. Apart from that, what was discussed in the meetings on June 5, 6, 8 and 9, September 19, 23 and 24, and October 9 and 10 in 2014?" Congress' media and publicity department head, Pawan Khera, asked at a press conference here.

"Puri wrote 32 emails while Epstein sent him 30 emails. There were 14 meetings, which began soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to office in 2014 and went on till 2017.

"The question is—what position did Hardeep Puri hold in June 2014, and in what capacity did he meet Epstein?" Khera asked.

Citing a recent interview of Puri, Khera said, "Why was Hardeep Puri sharing government policies with Epstein in his capacity as an ordinary citizen? He should first resign and then clarify this matter."

Ramdev case: X defends satire, free speech in Delhi HC

NEW DELHI, PTI: Social media platform X on Tuesday told the Delhi High Court that any content in the realm of satire, fair comment and public speech should be protected from takedown orders in cases seeking protection of personality right.

Baba Ramdev

Justice Jyoti Singh was hearing a lawsuit by Baba Ramdev alleging large-scale misappropriation and commercial exploitation of his personality, image, and identity across various online and social media platforms.

The counsel for X opposed the "indiscriminate" blocking of accounts in personality right suits when there was nothing "egregious", saying such orders have a chilling effect on freedom of speech.

He also referred to a post mentioned in Ramdev's lawsuit, a meme, and contended that it was satire which was protected in a democracy.

"This is purely satire. How does this violate personality rights I fail to understand. This is protected. Satire, fair comment and public speech is protected from personality right. Satire is part of democracy. There is no democracy without free speech," he said.

X's counsel also said that one of the objectionable accounts on its platform, bearing his name, was merely a parody account, which should be protected in this case.

Along similar lines, counsel for Meta Platforms also said that while it was not opposed to taking down of egregious content, there must be some "tangible monetisation" by a third party, especially when a global blocking order was being sought.

He also stated that most offending content was of news organisations and in case of any grievance, Ramdev should sue them for any incorrect information.

"You can't have a personality right against a news channel in putting your name in a news article," the lawyer said as he raised concerns of impact on fair reporting.

Solatium no substitute for sentence: SC

Top court warns against replacing jail with fines

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

'UNDUE SYMPATHY'

- SC sets aside Madras HC order reducing sentence in attempt-to-murder case
- Says object of punishment is deterrence, not something that can be purchased by money
- Bench condemns undue sympathy by courts
- Flags trend of HCs reducing sentences 'capriciously and mechanically'

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said that the practice of enhancing compensation payable to victims while reducing sentences, especially in cases of grave offences, is dangerous, as it may send a wrong message to society that offenders can absolve themselves of liability merely by paying monetary consideration.

A bench of Justices Rajesh Bindal and Vijay Bishnoi said that the misplaced understanding of various courts in treating compensation as a substitute for sentence is a matter of concern and a practice that should be condemned.

The court said the object of punishment is to send a social message to the miscreants that any violation of the moral turpitude of society would come with consequences, which cannot merely be "purchased by money".

In its judgment, the SC also cited a Sanskrit verse, which said, "The supreme objective of law is the protection of society and creating a deterrence against crime by imposing adequate punishment."

The court set aside a Madras High Court judgment which had upheld the conviction of two persons in an attempt-to-murder case but reduced their sentence from three years' imprisonment to the period already served, while enhancing the fine to Rs 50,000 each.

Upon hearing advocate A Velan for the victim's family, the court held that the undue sympathy shown by the high court was totally unwarranted, and such displays of overt sentiment risk undermining the administration of justice.

"We have observed a trend among various high courts wherein the sentences awarded to the accused persons by the trial court are reduced capriciously and mechanically, without any visible application of judicial mind," the bench said.

The court emphasised that certain basic factors should be kept in mind by courts while imposing sentences — such as proportionality, consideration of facts and circumstances, societal impact, and aggravating and mitigating factors.

It held that compensation payable to the victim is purely restitutory in nature and cannot be treated as equivalent to, or a substitute for, punishment.

The court held that the HC had acted in complete defiance of the law and created a travesty of established criminal jurisprudence in arriving at its conclusion.

The HC had noted that more than 10 years had elapsed since the incident and that the victim had subsequently been murdered by other persons a few years later. On this basis, it modified the sentence awarded to the accused.

The SC directed the private respondents to surrender before the trial court within four weeks to serve the remaining portion of their sentence.

Truth, not public sentiment, must guide justice: SC on actor Pratyusha case

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said that justice is not served by following majority sentiment or public pressure, rather it is served by truth, established through evidence and impartial investigation.

A bench of Justices Rajesh Bindal and Manmohan said, while public outrage is understandable in high-profile cases, it should never dictate the course of inquiry. Investigations require careful collection of evidence, impartial analysis, and conclusions grounded in fact.

"Allowing public sentiment to shape outcomes risks miscarriages of justice. A society committed to fairness must recognise that investigators and courts serve the truth, not popularity. Their independence is not a luxury but the foundation of justice itself," the bench said.

The court made these observations while upholding the conviction and sentence of two years awarded to Gudipalli Siddhartha Reddy by the Andhra Pradesh High Court for entering into a suicide pact with Pratyusha, a famous Telugu actor, in 2002, in view of opposition of family members to their marriage, resulting in her death.

> The court emphasises that justice is not served by following majority sentiment or public pressure. Justice is served by truth, established through evidence and impartial investigation. While public outrage is understandable in high-profile cases, it should never dictate the course of inquiry. Investigations require careful collection of evidence, impartial analysis and conclusions grounded in fact. A society committed to fairness must recognise that investigators and courts serve the truth, not popularity. Their independence is not a luxury but the foundation of justice itself
>
> SUPREME COURT

It held that Reddy has abetted the offence under Section 306 of the IPC by purchasing the pesticide with the knowledge of its lethal nature.

Further, it noted that in the absence of any explanation by the accused as to why the deceased and the accused consumed poison would lead to an adverse inference that it was consumed with the intent to die by suicide.

"Suicide in a suicide pact is conditional upon the mutual participation of the other. In other words, if not for the active participation of both parties, the act would not occur. The law treats such conduct as abetment because the State has a fundamental interest in preserving life. Any assistance in ending life is treated as a crime against the State," the bench said.

Pratyusha

The court held that the accused's conduct in entering into and acting upon the suicide pact fell squarely within all three situations envisaged in Section 107 of the IPC. "His participation directly facilitated the deceased's suicide. Notably, it is not his defence that the deceased was the dominant personality who pressured him into the pact. His culpability, therefore, stands established," the bench said, directing him to surrender within four weeks to serve the sentence.

The HC in the case reduced the sentence from five to two years' jail.

Pratyusha, who had acted in several films, and the appellant, an engineering student, had known each other for nearly a decade and wished to marry. Facing opposition from the appellant's mother and her threat of suicide, both allegedly consumed poison on February 23, 2002, and were admitted to a Hyderabad hospital. Pratyusha died the next day, while the appellant survived.

The case was later handed to the CBI. In its judgment, the court criticised Dr B Muni Swamy for conducting an unauthorised post mortem and falsely claiming to the media that Pratyusha had died of strangulation and was gangraped.

On the CBI's request, a committee of doctors of AIIMS Delhi was constituted, which gave its report that the cause of death was Organophosphate poisoning and the external injuries were caused due to therapeutic procedures.

If it cannot stand a dissident, then it is Congress' doom: Aiyar

NEW DELHI, PTI: Firing a fresh salvo, veteran leader Mani Shankar Aiyar on Tuesday said if the Congress cannot stand a dissident, then it is the party's "doom", and if it does not have the courage to respond to the person in "polite but firm language," then it doesn't deserve to rule.

Aiyar also recalled former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's words in Parliament in 1989 that "only a secular Bharat can survive" and dared the Congress high command to get his son, Rahul Gandhi, to repeat those words.

"The Congress lives because of dissidence; the Congress grows because there are many opinions, and it is all connected with the Vedic injunction that God is one, the Congress is one."

"But there are many paths that lead to God, and in a similar way, there are many paths that lead to Congress. Unfortunately, this lesson seems to have been forgotten by the current establishment," Aiyar said in a video released as part of his series, 'Mani Talk', on YouTube.

"If therefore, the current establishment cannot stand a dissident then I am afraid, it is the doom of the Congress," he said.

Rahul blocked my swearing-in as Assam CM in 2014: Sarma

GUWAHATI, DHNS: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said Sonia Gandhi had asked him to get ready for his swearing-in as CM amid conflict with Tarun Gogoi way back in 2014-2015, but Rahul Gandhi blocked the process.

Sarma was referring to the crisis in Congress between 2013 and 2015 due to the conflict between him and Tarun Gogoi, the CM then.

"At least 58 MLAs were in favour of me becoming the CM, and a few senior legislators had taken a neutral stand. Only 12 MLAs were not in my favour. Sonia Gandhi asked me to get ready for the swearing-in as CM. Later, we came to know that Rahul Gandhi, who was in the US then, made calls to block the process," he said.

Former Assam Cong chief to join BJP

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

A day after resigning from Congress, Bhupen Kumar Borah, the former president of the Opposition party's Assam unit, decided to join the ruling BJP on February 22 and contest the ensuing Assembly elections.

Borah, the two-time former MLA, announced his decision after Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma visited his residence on Tuesday evening.

Borah, who was replaced by MP Gaurav Gogoi as the party's state president in May last year, sent his resignation letter to AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday morning. In the letter, he had expressed dismay over the way the party is being run in the run-up to the Assembly elections.

Soon drama unfolded as several AICC leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, called Borah, and some even met him in Guwahati. Gaurav even apologised to Borah in front of the camera and requested him to withdraw his resignation.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma with former state Congress president Bhupen Borah during a press conference, in Guwahati, on Tuesday. PTI

Borah had indirectly stated that the party was being run by Rakibul Hussain, a Lok Sabha member from Dhubri.

However, Borah sought time till Tuesday morning.

The CM, who was supposed to meet him in the morning, postponed it till evening. Sarma, with Borah sitting beside him, announced that the former APCC chief, along with a few other Congress leaders, would join the saffron party on February 22.

"In the BJP, Borah will be accorded the dignity and respect he deserves keeping in mind his stature," the CM said.

Meanwhile, Congress MLA Sherman Ali Ahmed formally joined the Raijor Dal at a programme in Kalgachia in Barpeta district, where he was welcomed by its chief Akhil Gogoi and other senior leaders.

More Uttarakhand temples likely to ban entry of non-Hindus

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

The demand for banning the entry of non-Hindus in all the Hindu religious places, including of Kedarnath and Badrinath, in Uttarakhand has gained momentum after Shree Ganga Sabha put up boards at the Haridwar ghats stating that the entry of non-Hindus was "prohibited".

According to reports, various religious committees that manage important temples in the state are also likely to ban non-Hindus from entering their respective premises.

Reports also claimed that the Uttarakhand government was considering a proposal to ban the entry of non-Hindus in the immediate vicinity of the Hindu religious shrines in the state.

The ban could come into effect before the scheduled opening of the doors of the Kedarnath and Badrinath temples on April 22 and April 23, respectively.

"It is up to the Temple committees to decide who can be allowed entry into its premises... besides, why should a non-Hindu visit Kedarnath or Badrinath or any other Hindu religious place?" said a senior member of the Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee.

He also said that the entry of Muslims and Christians would be banned in the next 'Ardh Kumbh' on the bank of the Ganga in Haridwar in 2027.

"Non-Hindus can undertake commercial activities outside the prohibited areas," he added.

To impact livelihood

While the saffron outfits have welcomed the proposal, a section of the locals said that the ban would adversely affect the livelihood of many members of the community, who were engaged in transporting the pilgrims to some of the temples.

MODERNISATION PUSH

J&K cops turn to smart tech to fight militancy

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

STRATEGIC SHIFT

- Tech-led upgrades to boost autonomy in counter-terror ops
- Focus moves from large troop deployments to intelligence, rapid response
- Real-time communication improves coordination during ops
- Expanded CCTV, drones and digital tracking tools strengthen monitoring

With counter-terror operations in Jammu and Kashmir increasingly driven by intelligence, technology and rapid response rather than large-scale troop deployments, the J&K Police have begun a comprehensive modernisation push aimed at strengthening its operational autonomy, officials said.

The initiative, supported largely by the Ministry of Home Affairs, reflects a strategic shift towards empowering the police force with advanced surveillance, communication and investigative tools, allowing it to take the lead in detecting and neutralising emerging terror threats, particularly in urban and hinterland areas.

Officials said the modernisation programme is designed to address gaps exposed by changing militant tactics, including the use of encrypted communication, hybrid operatives and targeted attacks, by upgrading police infrastructure, enhancing forensic support and improving the protection and mobility of personnel deployed on the ground.

The drive includes the introduction of secure, real-time communication networks to improve coordination during counter-terror operations and emergency responses. Officials said faster and clearer information flow between units has already improved operational efficiency, particularly during joint search and cordon operations.

Surveillance capabilities are also being strengthened through the use of advanced monitoring systems, including enhanced CCTV coverage in urban areas, drone-based reconnaissance in difficult terrain and technical tools to track the movement and digital activities of suspected terror operatives and overground workers.

In parallel, the police are investing in forensic and investigative upgrades to strengthen terror-related prosecutions. Officials said improved forensic facilities will help ensure quicker analysis of evidence, better case documentation and stronger legal outcomes, especially in cases linked to radicalisation, terror financing and hybrid militancy.

Officials said the growing emphasis on modernisation reflects the expanding role of the J&K Police in counter-terror operations, with local police units increasingly taking the lead in intelligence-based actions, along with the army and central forces.

"The objective is to build a self-reliant force that can independently handle complex security situations, particularly in urban and semi-urban areas, while maintaining close coordination with other security agencies," a senior officer said.

The programme also includes specialised training to familiarise personnel with new technologies and evolving counter-terror tactics. Officials said continuous skill upgradation is essential to keep pace with changing threat patterns in the Union Territory.

DU bans protests on campus for a month citing law & order

NEW DELHI, PTI: Delhi University (DU) on Tuesday banned public meetings, processions, demonstrations and protests of any kind on campus for a month, citing concerns over obstruction of traffic, threats to safety and disturbance of public peace.

In an order, DU's office of the proctor said the restriction follows inputs that "unrestricted public gatherings" could escalate and affect law and order. It also referred to a prior direction by the police prohibiting public meetings, carrying torches or similar materials, slogan-shouting and speeches that may affect public tranquillity or traffic flow.

Manoj Kumar, proctor, DU, said in the past, organisers often failed to control such protests, which escalated and spread widely, resulting in deterioration of law and order within the campus. "Assembly of five or more persons, shouting slogans and making speeches, carrying of any hazardous materials, including mashals, beacons/torches etc are prohibited," the order read.

"The ban takes immediate effect and will remain in force for one month unless withdrawn earlier."

Mithuraj Dhusiya, associate professor at Hansraj College and member of the executive council, DU, called the move a "blanket clampdown". While acknowledging that protests must remain peaceful and that the university must ensure order, Dhusiya said invoking "obstruction of traffic" to bar gatherings is unacceptable.

The order comes after recent controversies, where two FIRs were registered by the Delhi Police after a scuffle broke out between two groups during a protest. On February 12, a bucket of water was thrown on historian Irfan Habib while he was speaking in a social justice event.

Kerala's Ayyappa conclave under audit glare

Temple board admits financial lapses, including sponsorship shortfall

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

IRREGULARITIES

- Organiser submits Rs 7.04 cr bill; temple board seeks settlement at Rs 4.99 cr
- Rs 3.85 cr raised in sponsorship (Rs 1 cr from Adani)
- Audit flags irregularities, including payments to a music troupe that never performed
- Board admits lapses in clarifying expenses

Amid efforts by the ruling Left Front in Kerala to defend suspected irregularities in the conduct of the Global Ayyappa Sangamam in September 2025, the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) has admitted flaws, including inadequate sponsorship.

TDB president K Jayakumar told reporters on Tuesday that the Indian Institute of Infrastructure and Construction (IIIC), which organised the event, submitted a bill of Rs 7.04 crore. The TDB, however, will ask them to settle for Rs 4.99 crore. "They will hopefully agree to it," Jayakumar said, even as reporters questioned whether the move was logical.

Jayakumar also said that the total sponsorship received for the event, including Rs 1 crore committed by the Adani Group, amounted to Rs 3.85 crore. Despite this, there was still a shortfall of around Rs 1.15 crore, which the board would try to raise from other sources without dipping into its own funds. Several sponsors who had initially committed later backed out, he added.

Addressing the media after a board meeting, Jayakumar said that the TDB had failed to provide proper clarifications to queries raised by the auditor about event's expenses. As a result, the auditor flagged a series of irregularities in the report submitted to the Kerala High Court. The TDB will now file an affidavit before the court, citing its clarifications, he said.

He also said the decision to entrust the IIIC with conducting the event without floating a tender was taken in view of the agency's prior experience in handling similar projects. All decisions related to the event were made by the previous governing body of the TDB.

The audit report cited several irregularities, including payments made to a music troupe that did not perform at the Ayyappa conclave. The Kerala HC had earlier directed that no TDB funds should be used for the event, and both the state government and the board had assured that the entire amount would be raised through sponsorship.

Even though the event, held on the banks of the Pamba river at Sabarimala last year, was presented as a forum to discuss the shrine's development, the opposition alleged it was part of the Left Front's political campaign ahead of polls.

Tina Ambani skips ED summons for second time

NEW DELHI, PTI: Reliance Group chairperson Anil Ambani's wife Tina Ambani on Tuesday skipped the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summons for the second time.

Tina Ambani

The former actor, summoned in connection with a money laundering case, did not appear before the federal probe agency on February 10, following which she was issued a fresh notice.

It was not immediately known if she furnished some grounds to the investigating officer for her non-appearance. The ED may issue her fresh dates, officials said.

Once she deposes, Tina Ambani will be questioned, and her statement will be recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said.

Anil Ambani, 66, has also been asked to depose before the agency on Wednesday for the second time as part of the investigation linked to multiple Reliance Group companies and their bank loans. He first appeared before the ED in August 2025.

It is understood that Tina Ambani has been called for questioning with regard to a money trail linked to the purchase of a luxury condominium in Manhattan.

Guj ATS arrests 2 Iranians with 203 kg of narcotics

SATISH JHA
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

The Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) seized 203 kg of suspected narcotic chemicals and arrested two Iranian nationals in a mid-sea operation near the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) off the Porbandar coast on Tuesday, with assistance from Indian Coast Guard officials.

ATS officials said the operation was based on credible information that Iranian drug smuggler Haji Fida had dispatched a consignment of approximately 200 kg of a suspected chemical substance from Konarak port in Iran. According to ATS officials, the consignment was to be handed over to an Indian vessel and subsequently smuggled to Punjab. The ATS has not yet revealed the network involved in receiving the suspected drugs.

ATS intelligence suggested that the shipment was scheduled to arrive in Indian waters sometime between February 15 and 16. Officials said the contraband was intended for mid-sea delivery to an Indian vessel for subsequent transport to Punjab.

"Based on this actionable intelligence, an operation was planned by a team of police personnel led by Superintendent of Police K Siddharth. The intelligence was also shared with the Indian Coast Guard, who jointly launched the operation," the ATS said in a statement.

On Monday night at around 8 pm, the joint team intercepted a suspicious Iranian speedboat within Indian waters and apprehended the two Iranian nationals on board. They were identified as Abdul Majid and Abdul Sattar, both residents of Chabahar, Konarak, in Iran.

"During the search of the vessel, the team recovered 203 packets containing a suspected chemical substance weighing approximately 203 kg. The vessel and the contraband were subsequently seized," the ATS said.

Bloom roads: NHAI to develop bee corridors along national highways

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) on Tuesday said that it will develop bee corridors along national highways in the country to reduce the increasing ecological stress faced by honeybees and other pollinators.

At least three such corridors are expected to come up within the next financial year, starting April 1, the Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) said in a statement.

The corridors will be developed along national highway stretches and other vacant NHAI land parcels, depending upon agro-climatic conditions and local suitability.

NHAI field offices across the country will identify national highway sections where clusters of flowering trees can be planted at intervals of approximately 500 meters to 1 km, corresponding to the average foraging distance of honeybees and wild bees.

The National Highway Authority of India field offices will also plan and develop at least three pollinator corridors during 2026-27. NHAI plans to plant around 40 lakh trees along national highways during the year 2026-27, around 60 per cent of which will be planted under the 'Bee Corridor' initiative, the statement said.

The bee corridors will have a continuous linear stretch of bee-friendly vegetation comprising flowering trees and plants that will ensure the availability of nectar and pollen throughout the year, the ministry said.

The 'Bee Corridor' initiative will help enhance ecological outcomes, contribute to pollinator conservation, and further strengthen NHAI's commitment to environmentally responsible National Highway development.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

I THINK ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS IS PIPING COLORFUL DESIGNS ONTO CAKES
IT REALLY LETS ME CHANNEL MY INNER VAN GOGH
WHAT IF IT DOESN'T TURN OUT THE WAY YOU EXPECTED?
THEN I JUST SAY I'M CHANNELING MY INNER PICASSO!

Hagar The Horrible

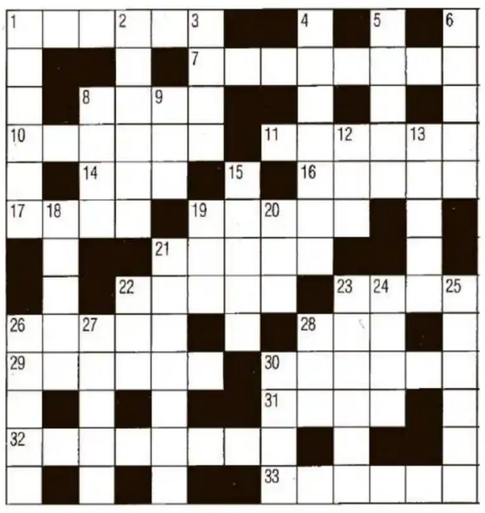
DOCTOR ZOOK, MY ANKLES ARE ALWAYS SORE!
PSST
PERHAPS YOUR MOUTH IS THE PROBLEM
I HEAR YOUR WIFE KICKS YOU UNDER THE TABLE WHENEVER YOU SPEAK UP AT A DINNER PARTY!

Beetle Bailey

Peanuts

Marvin

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12356



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
1 Indicates there's nothing in a few beers (6)
7 Chief country with a prominent shoreline (8)
8 The place for the low soldiery? (4)
10 In which to be accountably indebted (3,3)
11 Very little time (6)
14 A drink to help make you alert (3)
16 Rises irregularly, gentlemen (5)
17 Could she be good for a song? (4)
19 Arrived at the corner with a beast of burden (5)
21 A bit old to be seeing someone? (5)
22 Best! (5)
23 Cove with a bit of beach, apparently (4)
26 One of no importance to Oscar Wilde? (5)
28 A snake round one's neck! (3)
29 Dramatic utterances actors can't hear? (6)
30 Cooled that hot enthusiast Edward (6)
31 A rising singer (4)
32 Deep fissure exploited by cavers and some seamen (8)
33 Just the chap to wander around? (6)

DOWN
1 Weapon of Shakespearean character (6)
2 Close down before time, almost (6)
3 Wherein to be sheltered, if only outwardly (4)
4 Ed Davis cleverly gave warning (7)
5 Am run ragged in Belgium! (5)
6 Has a poor work rate, but is left in the side, possibly (5)
8 Being decorative, is carefully drawn (4)
9 Diocese in southeast Middlesex (3)
12 Love of football (3)
13 Nominal asset, possibly (5)
15 Pasty person? (5)
18 A detective so upset at farewell (5)
19 In a crack-up, maybe a write-off (3)
20 Methodical start by the police (3)
21 In Ireland, a deceived girl (7)
22 A roll or bun (3)
23 He wrote, maybe on card (6)
24 Henry from Shanklin (4)
25 It's handy when cutting curves (6)
26 One usually has hands over face (5)
27 Has one such feelings when confused? (5)
28 Sound sheepish (3)
30 A puce jumper (4)

ACROSS
1 Jungle expedition (6)
7 Refurbish (8)
8 Mexican snack (4)
10 Tropical American bird (6)
11 Picture house (6)
14 Bread roll (3)
16 Celestial body (5)
17 Drawn matches (4)
19 Tree (5)
21 Tag (5)
22 Devil (5)
23 Sketched (4)
26 Lowest point (5)
28 Charge (3)
29 Improves (6)
30 Find (6)
31 Dry (4)
32 Painting of a person (8)
33 View or glance (6)

DOWN
1 Group of seven (6)
2 Counting frame (6)
3 Press (4)
4 Of current affairs (7)
5 Seraglio (5)
6 Gain access to (3,2)
8 Cylinder (4)
9 Container (3)
12 And not (3)
13 Fuse (5)
15 Exclude (5)
18 A religion (5)
19 Feline (3)
20 Lair (3)
21 Pantries (7)
22 Transgression (3)
23 Reach a decision (6)
24 Peruse writing (4)
25 Snout beetle (6)
26 Diaper (5)
27 Disparage (5)
28 In favour of (3)
30 Overdue (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12355

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, Clubs 6, Spi-C-e 9, Oat-meal 10, A-MB-it 11, Music 12, Stops 13, Streaky 15, Les 17, User 18, Re-fuse 19, Spear 20, A-lien-s 22, RA-I'd 24, Rat 25, S-event-y 26, S-Wear 27, Bread 28, B-ill-y 29, Romulus 30, L-enin 31, Shock.
DOWN: 2, LI-M-it's 3, B-oil-er 4, Sat 5, Amity 6, S-ample-r 7, Plus 8, C-rises 12, Skips 13, Su-gar 14, Refi-t 15, L-U-can 16, See-D-y 18, R-ace-R 19, Snow-don 21, Laurie 22, Relish 23, Italic 25, Sarum 26, Sari 28, Bus.

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Habit 6, Taste 9, Nosegay 10, Stove 11, Rears 12, Signs 13, Medical 15, Dad 17, Amen 18, Assure 19, Rough 20, Closet 22, Pest 24, Hen 25, Berates 26, Pixie 27, Stoat 28, Hardy 29, Gastric 30, Gruel 31, Tempt.
DOWN: 2, Anthem 3, In vain 4, Toe 5, Peril 6, Tarnish 7, Ayes 8, Tartar 12, Sabot 13, Match 14, Demon 15, Duvet 16, Debts 18, Agree 19, Recital 21, Letter 22, Palace 23, Send-up 25, Birth 26, Page 28, Hit.

◆SU-DO-KU-6833◆

3		8	1		5			4
9				3			7	
	4	2			9			
7				4			8	
			3		2			
	5			9				1
			7			4	1	
	6			1				5
1			2		4			3

hard

3	1	9	7	8	5	2	4	6
7	8	5	6	2	4	3	9	1
2	6	4	1	9	3	8	5	7
6	2	7	5	1	9	4	3	8
5	9	3	4	6	8	7	1	2
1	4	8	3	7	2	5	6	9
8	3	6	2	5	1	9	7	4
4	7	2	9	3	6	1	8	5
9	5	1	8	4	7	6	2	3

SOLUTION TO 6832

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

©2025 Mattel, SCRABBLE™ and SCRABBLE tiles, including S1 tiles, are trademarks of Mattel.

H4 E1 G2 R1 W4 I1 E1 — 3rd Letter Triple
G2 M3 R1 A1 A1 A1 N1 — Triple Word Score
O1 O1 T1 W4 W4 K5 T1 — 3rd Letter Double
P3 A1 A1 W4 Y4 S1 M3

RACK 1
RACK 2
RACK 3
RACK 4

PAR SCORE 120-130
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

H4 O1 G2 W4 A1 S1 H4
N1 E1 T1 T1 L1 E1 D2
L1 Y4 S1 I1 N1 E1 S1
S1 U1 A1 V4 E1 L1 Y4

RACK 1 = 101
RACK 2 = 74
RACK 3 = 80
RACK 4 = 89
JUDD'S TOTAL 344

PAR SCORE 225-235

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TLEIE
TDOIT
WRTOHN
MILNEB

Do you need any help charting this song?
I'm going to be improvising.
Don't worry. I'm getting everything you're playing.
AN INSTRUMENT'S DIFFERENT PITCHES ARE WRITTEN DOWN USING LINES AND SYMBOLS TO ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: PENNY GUESS NESTLE FIXATE
Answer: After seeing how difficult the Jumble would be to solve, they had an — UNEASY FEELING

©2025 Tribune Content Agency, LLC All Rights Reserved.

HITORI-3287

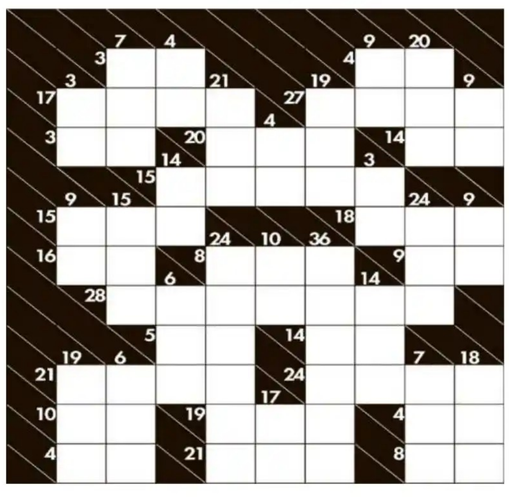
1	7	1	5	8	4	1	3
6	8	4	5	7	1	2	5
1	6	1	8	2	5	3	7
7	2	8	3	4	3	6	3
1	4	1	1	3	8	5	6
3	1	5	7	1	5	8	2
4	5	7	2	7	1	3	8
8	7	1	1	5	3	7	7

SOLUTION TO 3286

■	6	■	1	4	■	3	7
4	7	6	■	5	2	■	3
2	■	4	3	■	7	8	6
7	2	8	■	6	3	■	5
■	1	■	4	7	■	6	2
5	4	3	2	■	8	1	■
6	■	5	■	3	■	7	4
■	3	7	6	2	1	4	■

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3287



SOLUTION TO 3286

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3831

■					4		7	5
	3	5		6		1	■	2
		■				■		
			8	4	■			
7				■				
			7		■		6	
		1	2		8	■		
	9				5	4	■	
■								■

SOLUTION TO 3830

5	3	7	1	8	6	4	9	2
8	9	4	7	3	2	5	1	6
6	1	2	5	4	9	7	3	8
1	6	9	8	2	5	3	4	7
4	7	3	9	6	1	2	8	5
2	8	5	3	7	4	9	6	1
7	5	8	6	9	3	1	2	4
3	4	1	2	5	8	6	7	9
9	2	6	4	1	7	8	5	3

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

American civil rights leader Jesse Jackson dies at 84

Veteran activist and two-time presidential hopeful championed racial justice for decades

WASHINGTON, AFP

Veteran US civil rights activist Reverend Jesse Jackson, one of the nation's most influential Black voices, died peacefully on Tuesday morning at the age of 84, his family said.

Jackson, a Baptist minister, had been a civil rights leader since the 1960s, when he marched with Martin Luther King Jr. and helped raise funds for the cause. "Our father was a servant leader — not only to our family, but to the oppressed, the voiceless and the overlooked around the world," Jackson's family said. "His unwavering belief in justice, equality and love uplifted millions, and we ask you to honour his memory by continuing the fight for the values he lived by."

The family did not release a cause of death, but Jackson revealed in 2017 that he had the degenerative neurological disease Parkinson's. He was hospitalised for observation in November in connection with another neurodegenerative condition, according to media reports.

A dynamic orator and a successful mediator in international disputes, the long-time Baptist minister expanded the space for African Americans on the national stage for more than six decades. He was the most prominent Black person to run for the US presidency — with two unsuccessful attempts to capture the Democratic Party nomination in the 1980s — until Barack Obama took office in 2009.

Reverend Jesse Jackson in Newark, New Jersey. REUTERS FILE

President Donald Trump praised Jackson as an engaging, gregarious and street-smart man and claimed credit for helping him both before and after becoming president as Jackson fought to empower Black Americans. "Jesse was a force of nature like few others before him," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

Trump has a chequered record on race relations. He told The New York Times last month that because of civil rights-era protections "white people were treated very badly". Trump insists whites in South Africa are victims of genocide, and his administration regularly emphasises its focus on people with white European roots.

Kamala Harris, the first Black vice president whose presidential bid was defeated by Trump in 2024, hailed Jackson as "one of America's greatest patriots". She recalled driving to law school in the 1980s in California with a "Jesse Jackson for President" bumper sticker.

"You would not believe how people from every walk of life would give me a thumbs up or honk in support," she wrote on X.

Jackson was present for many consequential moments in the long battle for racial justice in the United States, including with King in Memphis in 1968 when the civil rights leader was slain. He openly wept in the crowd as Obama celebrated his 2008 presidential election, and he stood with George Floyd's family in 2021 after a court convicted a police officer of the unarmed Black man's murder during an arrest.

Indian cricketers join appeal for jailed Imran Khan in Pakistan

NEW DELHI, REUTERS: Indian cricket greats Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev joined a dozen other former international captains on Tuesday in demanding better prison treatment for "one of the finest all-rounders" of the game, Imran Khan, Pakistan's former prime minister.

Cricketer-turned-politician Khan, 73, has been in jail since August 2023, convicted in a string of cases that he says were politically driven following his ouster in a 2022 parliamentary vote.

Khan's lawyer told Pakistan's Supreme Court last week that the former cricketer had lost significant vision in his right eye while in custody. A medical board said on Monday that the swelling had reduced after treatment and his vision had improved.

Despite India's fraught relations with Pakistan, including military conflict last year, former India captains Gavaskar and Kapil signed a petition expressing "deep concern" about Khan's treatment and prison conditions.

"Many of us competed against him, shared the field with him, or grew up idolising his all-round brilliance, charisma and competitive spirit," they said in the petition. "Recent reports concerning his health — particularly the alarming deterioration of his vision while in custody — and the conditions of his imprisonment over the past two and a half years have caused us profound concern."

Tarique Rahman sworn in as Bangladesh PM

Regional leaders attend ceremony as BNP pledges stronger India ties

DHAKA, PTI

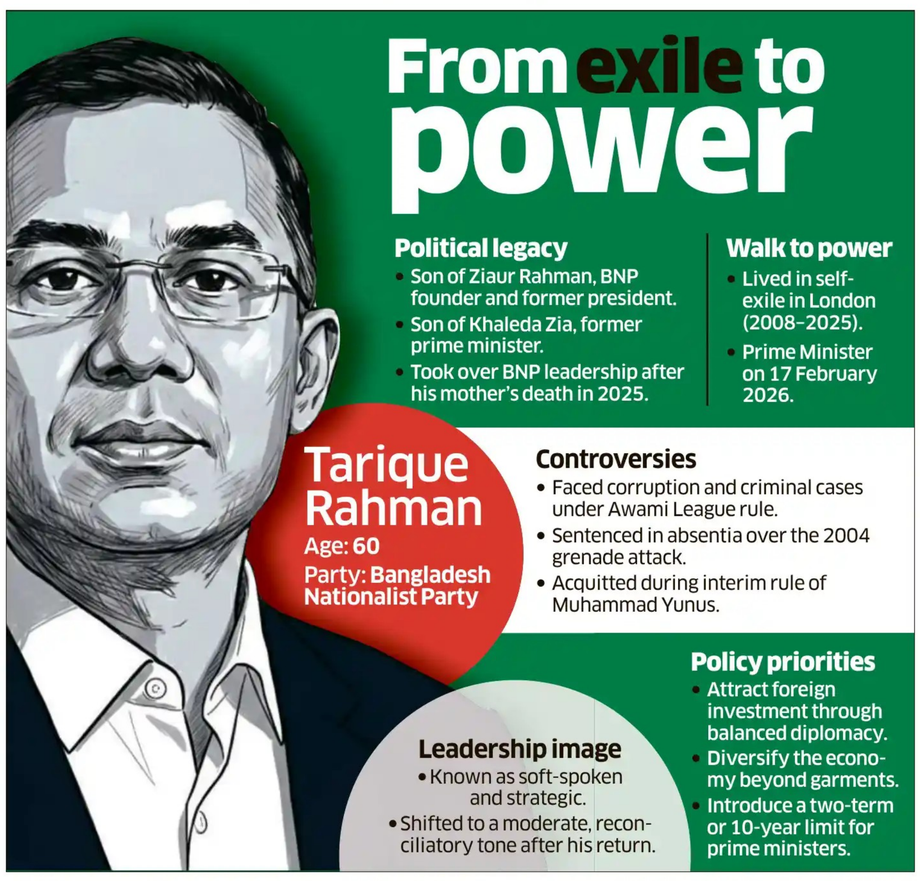
BNP leader Tarique Rahman was sworn in on Tuesday as Bangladesh's new prime minister, marking a fresh beginning for the country after 18 months of political uncertainty and lawlessness under the interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, accompanied by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, represented India at the oath ceremony held at the open space of the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad in the presence of Bangladesh's top political and military leadership.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath of office to 60-year-old Rahman at the South Plaza instead of Bangabhaban, in a departure from long-standing tradition. "I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of prime minister in accordance with the law," said Rahman, who led his party to a decisive victory in the general elections.

Besides Birla, Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, Bhutanese Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay, Pakistan's Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Nepal's Foreign Minister Bala Nanda Sharma and Sri Lanka's Minister of Health and Mass Media Nalinda Jayatissa were among those who attended the event.

Rahman, the son of late President Ziaur Rahman and former premier Khaleda Zia, returned home in December after living in London in self-exile for 17 years. He will serve as prime minister for the next five years.


From exile to power
Political legacy
• Son of Ziaur Rahman, BNP founder and former president.
• Son of Khaleda Zia, former prime minister.
• Took over BNP leadership after his mother's death in 2025.
Walk to power
• Lived in self-exile in London (2008–2025).
• Prime Minister on 17 February 2026.
Tarique Rahman
Age: 60
Party: Bangladesh Nationalist Party
Controversies
• Faced corruption and criminal cases under Awami League rule.
• Sentenced in absentia over the 2004 grenade attack.
• Acquitted during interim rule of Muhammad Yunus.
Leadership image
• Known as soft-spoken and strategic.
• Shifted to a moderate, conciliatory tone after his return.
Policy priorities
• Attract foreign investment through balanced diplomacy.
• Diversify the economy beyond garments.
• Introduce a two-term or 10-year limit for prime ministers.

President Shahabuddin also administered the oath to 25 ministers and 24 state ministers at the ceremony, attended by several leaders from neighbouring countries. Of the 25 ministers, nine had served in Khaleda Zia's cabinets.

Minorities in Cabinet

The new cabinet includes two minority community members, BNP Vice President Nitai Roy Chowdhury of the Hindu faith and Dipen Dewan, a Buddhist.

Cabinet division officials said the portfolios of the ministers and junior ministers would be announced later.

In a surprise development, the new cabinet also inducted the outgoing interim regime's security adviser, Khalilur Rahman, as foreign minister, while several senior BNP leaders were left out of the new cabinet.

Attack on army checkpoint kills 11 Pak security personnel

PESHAWAR, REUTERS: Militants rammed a vehicle filled with explosives into an army checkpoint in north-western Pakistan, killing 11 security personnel and a child, the military said on Tuesday, as the South Asian nation battles a surge in violence.

Women and children were among seven people wounded in Monday's attack in Bajur district, which lies along the border with Afghanistan, the military said.

The militants drove into the wall of a checkpoint after security forces blocked their attempt to enter a residential compound for soldiers, the military said, adding that 12 attackers were killed as they attempted to flee the scene. The Islamist Pakistani Taliban, also known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), claimed responsibility for the attack.

The TTP has waged a war against the state since 2007 in a bid to enforce its strict brand of Islamic governance on the predominantly Muslim nation. It has stepped up its attacks since revoking a ceasefire with Islamabad in late 2022. Pakistan blames Afghanistan for providing a safe haven to the militants.

A rare bombing at a mosque in the capital, Islamabad, earlier this month killed more than 30 people during Friday prayers. The attack was claimed by the Islamic State militant group, raising fears that Pakistan could be facing a resurgence of militancy on multiple fronts.

Trump to decide 'soon' on sending weapons to Taiwan

ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE, AFP: US President Donald Trump said Monday he would decide soon on whether to send more weapons to Taiwan, after Chinese President Xi Jinping warned him not to do so.

"I'm talking to him about it. We had a good conversation, and we'll make a determination pretty soon," Trump said, adding that he has a "good relationship" with the Chinese leader, whose country claims the self-ruled island of Taiwan as its territory. In a phone call with Trump on February 4, Xi called for "mutual respect" in relations with the United States, while warning Washington about arms sales to the democratic island.

"The Taiwan question is the most important issue in China-US relations... The US must handle arms sales to Taiwan with caution," Xi said, according to China's state broadcaster.

Trump and Xi are due to meet in Beijing in April.

China's Communist Party has never ruled Taiwan, but Beijing claims the island of 23 million people is part of its territory and has not ruled out the use of force to annex it. The United States does not officially recognise Taiwan, but Washington is Taipei's main security backer -- although the tone of that support has softened slightly under Trump.

Iran, US agree on guiding principles for potential N-deal

Tehran temporarily shuts Strait of Hormuz

GENEVA, AP/PTI

Iran and the US agreed to "a set of guiding principles" laying the groundwork for a broader deal during talks in Geneva on Tuesday, Tehran's top diplomat said, after the leaders of both countries traded warnings of military action.

The Omani-mediated talks were aimed at averting the possibility of US military intervention to curb Iran's nuclear programme, while Tehran is demanding the lifting of sanctions that are crippling its economy.

Iran's supreme leader had warned earlier in the day that the country had the ability to sink a US warship recently deployed to the region, while President Donald Trump alluded the previous day to unspecified "consequences" should the two sides fail to strike a deal.

US-Iranian journalist Masih Alinejad speaks on the sideline of a second round of US-Iranian talks in Geneva on Tuesday. AFP

"Ultimately, we were able to reach broad agreement on a set of guiding principles, based on which we will move forward and begin working on the text of a potential agreement," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told state TV after Tuesday's talks.

He added that once both sides had come up with draft texts for an agreement, "the drafts would be exchanged and a date for a third round (of talks) would be set". Meanwhile, Iran announced the temporary closure of the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday for live military drills in a rare show of force.

US plans to deploy more missile launchers to the Philippines

MANILA, AP/PTI

The United States plans to deploy more high-tech missile systems to the Philippines to help deter aggression in the South China Sea, where the treaty allies on Tuesday condemned what they called China's "illegal, coercive, aggressive, and deceptive activities."

Beijing has repeatedly expressed alarm over the installation in the northern Philippines of a US mid-range missile system called the Typhon in 2024 and of an anti-ship missile launcher last year. It said the US weapons were aimed at containing China's rise and warned that these were a threat to regional stability. China has asked the Philippines to withdraw the missile launchers from its territory, but officials led by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr have rejected the demand.

US and Philippine officials held annual talks Monday in Manila on broadening security, political and economic engagements and boosting collaboration with regional security allies.

The US and the Philippines outlined in a joint statement on Tuesday specific defense and security plans for this year, including joint military exercises, Washington's support to help modernize the Philippine military and efforts "to increase deployments of US cutting-edge missile and unmanned systems to the Philippines."

The longtime allies "underscored their support for preserving freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded lawful commerce and other lawful uses of the sea for all nations," the statement said.

Confrontations between Chinese and Philippine coast guard forces have spiked in the disputed waters in recent years.

QUESTIONABLE PRACTICES

Shein faces EU probe over addictive product design features

LONDON, AP/PTI

European Union regulators are investigating Shein over concerns the online retailer hasn't done enough to limit the sale of illegal products or protect users from the platform's allegedly addictive design.

The 27-nation bloc's executive arm said Tuesday that it opened formal investigation under the bloc's sweeping rulebook known as the Digital Services Act, which requires the biggest online platforms to take extra steps to protect internet users from dodgy products.

Shein may be required to alter its actions, or pay a hefty fine if a so-called non-compliance decision is reached following an in-depth investigation, the European Commission said. One area its investigation is focusing on is whether Shein has the proper safeguards in place to limit the sale of products that are illegal in the EU, the commission said, including items that amount to child sexual abuse material such as "child-like sex dolls."

The the fast-fashion giant came under fire last year in France, where authorities found illegal weapons including firearms, knives and machetes as well as child-like sex dolls for sale on its website.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

People gather for a protest in Lima on Tuesday as Peru's Congress convenes for an emergency session to debate a motion to remove President José Jeri over his undisclosed meetings with a Chinese businessman. REUTERS

Mumbai unveiled as host of Earthshot Prize 2026

▸ Mumbai will play host to the Earthshot Prize 2026, the world's leading environmental award founded by Britain's Prince William, Kensington Palace in London announced on Tuesday, PTI reports from London.

Describing India as one of the world's most important forces for climate and nature, the heir to the British throne said the country's scale had the power to inspire progress in the field of climate action.

This year's so-called Green Oscars will bring together environmental and business leaders, investors and philanthropists who are spearheading change in Mumbai in November, when five Earthshot winners will bag 1 million pounds each to accelerate the impact of their innovative solutions. "We must continue to look to the future with urgency and optimism, which is why I am delighted that Mumbai will host the Earthshot Prize 2026," said William, founder and president of the annual prize.

"India is one of the world's most important forces for climate and nature. What succeeds in India at scale has the power to inspire progress everywhere.

Hyatt chief quits over Epstein ties

▸ The executive chairman of the Hyatt hotel chain stepped down on Monday after emails revealing his ties to sex offender Jeffrey Epstein came to light, AFP reports from Washington.

US businessman Thomas Pritzker maintained contact with Epstein well after the latter was convicted of soliciting prostitution from a minor in 2008. Epstein died in prison in 2019 while awaiting charges of sex trafficking of girls, in what was ruled a suicide.

"Good stewardship... means protecting Hyatt, particularly in the context of my association with Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell, which I deeply regret," Pritzker said in a statement carried by US media.

Performers take part in a lion dance during celebrations on the first day of the Lunar New Year in Beijing, China, on Tiesday. REUTERS

Grok faces more scrutiny

▸ Elon Musk's social media platform X faces a European Union privacy investigation after its Grok AI chatbot started producing non-consensual deepfake images, Ireland's data privacy regulator said on Tuesday, AP/PTI reports from London.

Ireland's Data Protection Commission said it notified X on Monday that it was opening the inquiry under the 27-nation EU's strict data privacy regulations, adding to the scrutiny X is facing in Europe and other parts of the world over Grok's behaviour. Grok sparked a global backlash after it began granting requests from X users to undress people using its AI image generation and editing capabilities, including placing women in transparent bikinis or revealing clothing.

Sannazaro theatre destroyed

▸ A fire gutted the interior of the historic wood-framed Teatro Sannazaro in a wealthy neighbourhood of the Italian city of Naples on Tuesday, Reuters reports.

The fire is believed to have started in an apartment block in the Chiaia district, but spread rapidly to the nearby 19th-century theatre, bringing its domed roof crashing to the ground and devastating the plush stalls and tiers of gilded boxes. "Very little of the theatre remains," Naples fire commander Giuseppe Paduano told reporters. "Inside there are still some small hotspots that we will extinguish shortly. As for the causes, it's still too early to say." Naples Mayor Gaetano Manfredi said initial indications suggested the blaze had started accidentally.

Director Haile Gerima poses with his Berlinale Camera award during a photocall at the 76th Berlinale International Film Festival on Tuesday. REUTERS

AI FOR FUTURE : Top firms looking at opportunities as businesses align themselves with major disruptor

Adani bets $100 bn on data centres to power India's AI ambitions

BENGALURU, REUTERS

Adani Enterprises on Tuesday said it will invest $100 billion (about Rs 9.1 lakh crore) to build renewable-powered AI-ready data centres by 2035, positioning India as a contender in the global AI race.

India has seen a surge in big-ticket AI infrastructure spending, with global players like Google, Amazon, Meta Platforms and Microsoft ramping up investments along with domestic companies such as Reliance and TCS.

"AI-ready data centres would be a critical nerve centre of the AI-driven environment and it's natural that large groups with deep pockets will get future-ready by setting up such data centres," said market analyst Ambareesh Baliga.

Top firms, including Reliance and the Adani Group, are moving quickly to capture the vast opportunities as businesses align themselves with what is seen as a major disruptor ahead, he added.

Adani said the investment is expected to trigger an additional $150 billion across related industries, including server manufacturing and sovereign cloud platforms. Together, this is projected to create a $250-billion AI infrastructure ecosystem in India over the decade, it added.

Having been on the periphery of the AI boom so far due to the absence of any significant chip manufacturing capability, data centres represent India's best chance of making a mark on the global stage.

The investment will develop a model linking renewable energy, power grid resilience and AI computing, according to Adani.

"For decades, we imported technology. Now we are building the backbone," Chairman Gautam Adani said in a post on X. "India will not follow the AI century. India will shape it".

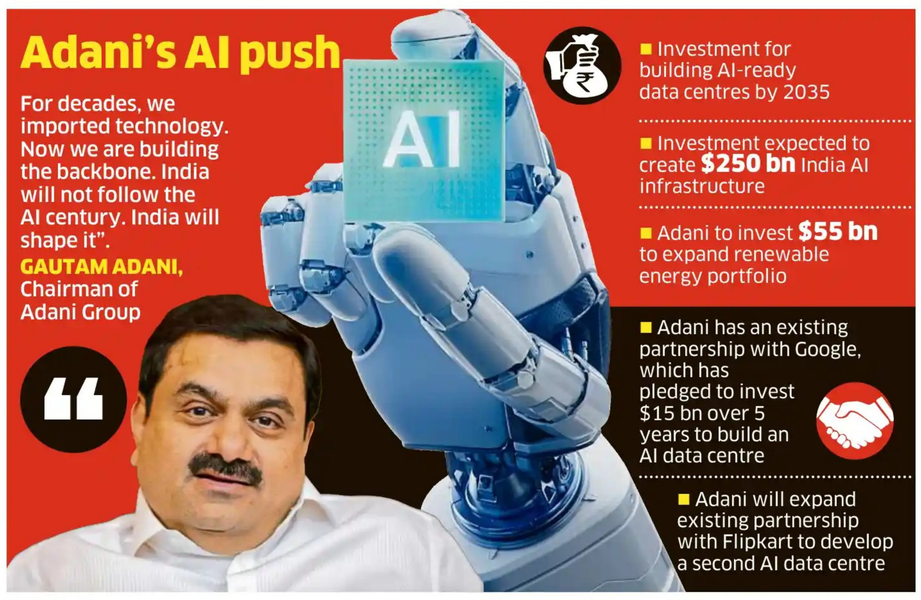
The conglomerate will build on its existing 2 GW data centre capacity and scale it to 5 GW to create the world's largest integrated data centre platform, it said, without providing a timeline.

Additionally, Adani will invest $55 billion to expand its renewable energy portfolio, which will include one of the world's largest battery energy storage systems.

Adani has an existing partnership with Google, which has pledged to invest $15 billion over five years to build an AI data centre, its biggest ever investment in India.

The company added that it will expand its existing partnership with Flipkart to develop a second AI data centre.

It is also in discussions with other major players to establish large-scale campuses across India, it said, without disclosing further details.


Adani's AI push
For decades, we imported technology. Now we are building the backbone. India will not follow the AI century. India will shape it".
GAUTAM ADANI, Chairman of Adani Group
AI
Investment for building AI-ready data centres by 2035
Investment expected to create $250 bn India AI infrastructure
Adani to invest $55 bn to expand renewable energy portfolio
Adani has an existing partnership with Google, which has pledged to invest $15 bn over 5 years to build an AI data centre
Adani will expand existing partnership with Flipkart to develop a second AI data centre

Humans+Agents+Robots to work together in B'luru by 2029

UMA KANNAN
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Imagine each person working with various agents and robots together. Instead of just one task, he/she can assign many agents to carry out multiple jobs. All this will be possible by 2029, Bharat 1. AI Co-founder Umakant Soni told *DH*.

At the India AI Impact Summit on Tuesday, Bharat1. AI unveiled its vision to build a Humanity-First AI City in Bengaluru — a city-scale research and infrastructure initiative designed to advance foundational Agentic and Physical AI systems in real-world environments.

"The first phase of this vision will take shape through the B1 AI Superpark — a 500,000 sq ft AI research and innovation campus in Sarjapur. Phase 1 will focus on developing and stress-testing universal basic intelligence frameworks in controlled, real-world conditions," Soni said, adding that the park will initially house close to 10,000 researchers, and will later scale to 25,000 globally.

The Superpark will bring together leading Indian institutions, including The Airawat Research Foundation (IIT Kanpur), SPARC (Safety, Privacy & AI Research Centre, IISc), Wadhwani School of AI & Intelligent Systems (IIT Kanpur), BITS Pilani, iSPIRT Foundation, and IIT Ropar, as early foundational research partners.

Researchers, engineers, and startups from these partners will collaborate on measurable, verifiable intelligence systems spanning robotics, autonomous infrastructure, mobility, and human–machine interaction, Soni further said.

He added that future professionals may use AI agents trained in their personal style. "A journalist's agent could conduct preliminary interviews and surface insights. AI will augment productivity rather than replace human roles," he said.

According to Soni, AI is expected to create new opportunities rather than eliminate work. Speaking at the summit, Soni said that we are at an inflection point in the AI revolution. Intelligence is moving out of labs and into the fabric of society. Scaling systems without validating them in complex, real-world environments is a risk we cannot afford.

"Bharat1.AI is our moonshot for humanity — a commitment to build real-world foundational intelligence that is safe, verifiable, and aligned with human values. The B1 AI Superpark is the first step toward creating a city-scale validation framework where agentic and physical AI can evolve responsibly, not just powerfully," he explained.

Humanoid robots, supercomputing major draws at AI Impact Expo

UMA KANNAN
NEW DELHI, DHNS

NTT DATA's robot dog Fluffy.

Manual coffee picking is becoming more challenging due to labour shortage, especially in Kodagu and Chikkamagaluru, but in the near future, it could be done with ease by robots. AI-enabled robots can make decisions of picking ripe cherries and they can even access inaccessible and steep terrain. Imagine robots accessing cold data centres and mining areas!

One of the several attractions in the India AI Impact Expo 2026 is NTT DATA's robots. Called Fluffy, these robot dogs with arms can carry out all functions. The Japanese company has many engineers based out of India, especially in Bengaluru, and they are the ones who run the software behind these robots.

The company is planning to collaborate with startups and give Fluffy a robotic arm that can easily detect the maturity of coffee cherries and pick them. Santosh Krishna, VP — Innovation at NTT DATA, said these robots can even be deployed for surveillance purposes.

"We are working towards it (engaging robots for coffee ripe picking). Robots can be used for many agricultural purposes," Krishna said. The cost of these robots are around Rs 15-20 lakh. Humanoid robotics and multilingual AI are among key highlights of the expo.

Another major attraction was Qualcomm's humanoid systems. The company showcased its robotic technologies apart from its first robotics processor.

Many countries have also displayed their latest AI features and products at the expo. In the Italian Pavilion, eight startups from Italy have showcased their latest offerings. Oraigo is an Italian neurotech startup that specialises in the prevention of drowsiness and fatigue while driving. Michele Galetta, founder of the company told *DH* that they are looking for partners in India to deploy this solution. Oraigo offers a web-based analytics platform for fleets that aggregates data from multiple driving sessions. The 10 thematic pavilions comprising over 300 exhibitors from India and 30 countries highlight how AI is driving scientific advancement, industrial resilience, innovation, and the democratisation of digital resources.

Key areas showcased include:

- AI-driven protein engineering and drug discovery
- Neuroscience and cognitive systems research
- Use of advanced computing and quantum-centric methods to process large-scale biological and clinical data
- Generative AI and Large Language Models (LLMs) for multilingual and secure applications

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) on the second day of the summit released FiMI (Finance Model for India), a domain-specific language model built for India's payments ecosystem. Developed in-house by NPCI, FiMI currently powers NPCI's UPI Help Assistant and is designed to address limitations observed in general-purpose large language models when applied to high-scale, high-trust payment workflows.

Centre to roll out AI-based tools for child malnutrition monitoring

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Ministry of Women and Child Development Secretary Anil Malik on Tuesday said the ministry is preparing to deploy AI-based growth monitoring tools to track malnutrition among children.

Speaking at the AI summit, he said the ministry is entering a phase of large-scale deployment of AI tools, particularly through digital recordings, to monitor child growth and detect early signs of malnutrition.

The initiative aims to enable realtime tracking and strengthen targeted interventions in nutrition programmes. Insisting that AI would significantly enhance monitoring capabilities in large welfare networks such as Anganwadi services, Malik said the ministry is also planning to introduce an AI-enabled chatbot to assist Anganwadi workers.

The chatbot is designed to provide frontline workers with quick guidance on nutrition, health practices, and programme implementation, thereby improving service delivery at the grassroots level.

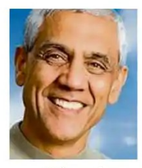
'Need indigenous AI models'

NEW DELHI, DHNS: S Krishnan, Secretary in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), on Tuesday said the government has invested in the development of indigenous and sovereign AI models to address concerns related to bias and to ensure that India has AI systems primarily trained on Indian data.

Emphasising that India must retain control over the functioning of AI models, he stated: "India needs to have AI models where nobody else has the kill switch, and it is always with us."

AI will disrupt traditional job structures, warns Vinod Khosla

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Venture capitalist Vinod Khosla on Tuesday said rapid advances in AI will fundamentally disrupt traditional employment structures, particularly in countries like India that have relied heavily on IT-led growth.


Vinod Khosla

Speaking at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 here, Khosla said: "It's very clear to me that the people in India don't believe something will happen to IT. By 2030, there will be no such thing as IT services or BPO. Those are gone. They are disruptive, and people are not paying enough attention."

He emphasised that AI continues to make rapid advancements across sectors and predicted that the full picture on jobs will become clear by 2050.

The co-founder of Sun Microsystems has previously predicted that AI may eliminate large sections of white-collar employment.

He also praised India's recent efforts in AI, noting: "India is doing a good job. The AI Impact summit seems to be unbelievably successful."

AI should follow blueprint of India's DPI: Kant

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in India should be open-source and follow the blueprint of the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), especially Unified Payments Interface (UPI) that led to success in financial inclusion, former CEO, NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant, said on Tuesday.

"Our digital ecosystem worked because our models were open-sourced. My view is that there has to be a layer of digital public identity in AI, on top of which we should allow the private sector to open and compete," Kant said at the India AI Impact Summit.

Kant, who served as India's G20 Sherpa during its presidency year, said the digital public infrastructure helped India leapfrog decades of progress in the payments system.

He warned that without a framework for DPI the AI could end up creating a deeply unequal society.

"The challenge is whether we can ensure AI reaches the population below the poverty line, whether it can be used to transform the lives of citizens in the Global South and whether it can be used to improve learning, health outcomes, and nutritional standards,"

Amitabh Kant

Kant remarked, while participating in a panel titled 'AI for India's Next Billion: Intergenerational Insights for Inclusive and Future-Ready Growth'.

Kant said India is contributing more data to AI development than the US. "If you look at OpenAI, ChatGPT, we are providing more data than the US — 33% more," he specified.

"These large language models are getting better and better on the basis of data from the Global South. It is essential that this contribution translates into benefits for these regions," he added.

Dismissing the concerns over job losses due to AI adoption, Kant said technological revolutions historically generate new forms of employment rather than eliminating jobs.

"No technology ever leads to lost jobs. It creates new jobs, but of a different kind," he said.

Kant said the true measure of AI success should be its ability to improve lives, particularly in the Global South, rather than simply boosting the market valuation of large technology firms.

IN BRIEF

Maruti Suzuki launches maiden EV at Rs 11 lakh

▸ Bengaluru, Reuters: Maruti Suzuki launched its maiden electric vehicle in the local market on Tuesday, along with a battery rental plan. The e Vitara SUV, developed under Suzuki Motor's global design and manufacturing partnership with Toyota, is being built in India since August last year. The company exported 13,000 units to 28 countries in 2025.

Maruti has priced the SUV at Rs 11 crore, accompanied by a battery rental plan that will cost Rs 3.99 per km.

Air India, Lufthansa sign landmark deal

▸ Mumbai, DHNS: In a landmark deal, national carrier Air India and Lufthansa Group signed an MoU establishing the framework for a joint business agreement between their airlines and subsidiaries, including Air India Express, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, ITA Airways, Lufthansa, Swiss International Air Lines, and other affiliated carriers.

Leveraging the India-EU FTA and building on their existing codeshare agreements and shared membership in Star Alliance, the MoU enables the carriers to explore ways to boost connectivity between India and major European markets.

Reopening talks with Paramount: Warner Bros.

▸ New York, AFP: Warner Bros. Discovery on Tuesday said it has reopened talks with Paramount Skydance on its buyout offer, giving the company a week to beat a rival Netflix bid.

These discussions, scheduled to end on February 23, are designed to give Paramount Skydance a chance to make its "best and final offer", Warner Bros. Discovery said.

AI will redefine tech jobs, coding will no longer be core: Nilekani

BENGALURU, PTI: AI is rewriting the grammar of software development. And writing codes will no longer be the central role for tech professionals, Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani said on Tuesday.

Nanadan Nilekani

AI, he said, is being adopted faster than any previous technological transition, from the internet to smartphones, and is poised to fundamentally reshape how businesses operate.

"Talent will have to deal with a world where writing code will not be the goal. It'll actually be making AI work, orchestration, and those kinds of things," Nilekani said at Infosys' Investor Day. "Customer journeys, operating models, and mental models all have to change. Every enterprise must rethink how it operates."

While coding may end, new jobs will be created. The talent transformation is huge, he said, adding that there will be a need for AI engineers, forward deployment engineers, forensic analysts — roles that did not exist a few years ago.

Infosys, Anthropic announce collaboration in AI

Plans to deliver advanced enterprise AI solutions

BENGALURU, DHNS

Infosys, a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting, on Tuesday announced a strategic collaboration with Anthropic, an AI safety and research firm, to develop and deliver advanced enterprise AI solutions to companies across telecommunications, financial services, manufacturing, and software development. The collaboration will begin in telecommunications with a dedicated Anthropic Center of Excellence to build and deploy AI agents tailored to industry-specific operations, the company stated.

At its core, the collaboration integrates Anthropic's Claude models, including Claude Code, with Infosys Topaz AI offerings to help enterprises automate complex workflows, accelerate software delivery, and adopt AI with the governance and transparency that regulated industries require.

The collaboration reflects a shared commitment to ensuring AI drives real transformational value, not just efficiency gains. Together, Infosys and Anthropic aim to help clients reimagine the enterprise operating model by combining deep industry expertise, frontier AI, and engineering scale into one unified approach.

A core focus will be agentic AI – systems that go beyond answering questions to independently handling multi-step tasks like processing claims, generating and testing code, or managing compliance reviews. Using tools like the Claude Agent SDK, Infosys and Anthropic will help clients build AI agents that can work persistently across long, complex processes rather than one-off interactions. The collaboration will also help organisations modernise legacy systems, combining Infosys Topaz and Claude to accelerate migration and reduce the cost of updating aging infrastructure.

Building on these agentic AI capabilities, Infosys and Anthropic will develop custom AI agents tailored to specific industries and business functions.

"There's a big gap between an AI model that works in a demo and one that works in a regulated industry – and if you want to close that gap, you need domain expertise. Infosys has exactly that kind of expertise across important industries: telecom, financial services, and manufacturing," Anthropic CEO and Co-Founder Dario Amodei said.

"From modernising financial services with intelligent risk management and compliance, to enabling engineering businesses to lead with AI-driven design and manufacturing, the goal is to leverage the joint expertise of Infosys and Anthropic to accelerate AI value realisation for global enterprises," Infosys CEO Salil Parekh said.

Infy eyes $300-400 bn opportunity

BENGALURU, PTI: Infosys on Tuesday unveiled its AI First Value Framework, positioning itself to capture an estimated $300-400 billion incremental AI services opportunity by 2030, as global enterprises accelerate adoption of generative and agentic AI.

The company said the framework, powered by its Infosys Topaz suite, will help enterprises unlock AI value at scale and move from experimentation to enterprise-wide AI operating models.

LABORATORY OF THE FUTURE

Telangana eyes $25 bn spend in life sciences

SNV SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Telangana has set an ambitious goal to attract $25 billion in investments, generate 5 lakh jobs, and transform Hyderabad into a "Laboratory of the Future", a global hub for innovation-led life sciences growth. The state unveiled these plans at the BioAsia 2026 conference on Tuesday.

Under the theme 'TechBio Unleashed: AI, Automation & the Biology Revolution', the two-day event examines how AI, advanced biology, and intelligent manufacturing are converging to transform therapy discovery, development, and delivery worldwide. BioAsia 2026 drew record participation, with over 4,000 delegates from 500 top life sciences companies worldwide. Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy presented the Genome Valley Excellence Award to Prof Bruce Levine of the University of Pennsylvania.

At Bio Asia 2026, major announcements were made by Opella Healthcare (France), Vaksindo Animal Health Pvt Ltd (division of JAPFA, Indonesia), Tredence Inc (USA), and Rx Propellant (RxP). The Swiss Pharmaceutical giant, Novartis, unveiled a logo celebrating 25 years of its GCC presence in India, with Hyderabad as its largest centre globally outside its headquarters in Basel.

On the sidelines of the conference, Reddy met the leadership teams of Miltenyi Biotec, Sanofi, MSD, and Takeda, along with the Consul General of Indonesia, and a team from Vaksindo, Indonesia.

"Telangana has established itself as a global leader in life sciences, pharmaceuticals, and healthcare. The Next Gen Life Sciences Policy 2026-30 emphasises that future growth will be driven by cross-border collaboration, international capital, and shared innovation," the CM said, after inaugurating the conference.

State Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu said BioAsia 2026 stands as a premier platform uniting leading experts in healthcare and life sciences to explore innovative pathways for industry growth.

Harmanpreet opts out; Hardik to lead India

NEW DELHI, PTI: Mid-fielder Hardik Singh was on Tuesday named captain of the embattled Indian men's hockey team for its FIH Pro League matches in Hobart from February 20 to 25 after regular skipper Harmanpreet Singh opted out due to "personal reasons."

The upcoming leg of the tournament will feature India alongside Spain and hosts Australia at the Tasmania Hockey Centre in Hobart. The side lost all its four matches in the just-concluded Rourkela leg, which included a shocking 0-8 drubbing against Argentina.

India squad: Goalkeepers: Suraj Karkera, Mohith Honnenahalli Shashikumar.
Defenders: Amit Rohidas, Jarmanpreet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Sanjay, Sumit, Amandeep Lakra, Yashdeep Siwach, Poovanna Chandura Boby.
Midfielders: Rajinder Singh, Manmeet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Hardik Singh, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh, Vishnu Kant Singh, Raj Kumar Pal.
Forwards: Abhishek, Shilanand Lakra, Mandeep Singh, Araijeet Singh Hundal, Aditya Arjun Lalage, Angad Bir Singh, Maninder Singh.

IN BRIEF

Mathru Cup from March 5

▸ The Karnataka State Basketball Association will conduct the Mathru Cup basketball championship for women from March 5 to 8 at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium Courts, reports DHNS.

Those interested mail to ksbb08@gmail.com on or before February 25.

Fit-again Pratika returns

▸ Having recuperated from an ankle injury, batter Pratika Rawal was on Tuesday added to India's women's cricket squad for a three-match ODI series against Australia beginning February 24 in Brisbane, reports PTI from New Delhi

India's updated squad: Harmanpreet Kaur (capt), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Shafali Verma, Renuka Thakur, Sree Charani, Vaishnavi Sharma, Kranti Gaud, Sneh Rana, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh (WK), Uma Chetry (WK), Kashvee Gautam, Amanjot Kaur, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Pratika Rawal.

Sreejesh re-applies

▸ Former goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, whose contract as India's junior men's hockey team chief coach ended in December last year, has re-applied for the position, which is set to be decided in a fortnight's time, reports PTI from New Delhi.

India A advance to semis

▸ Senior India national team bowlers Tanuja Kanwar and Minnu Mani dished out a dominating display to guide India A to a seven-wicket victory over Nepal and seal their semifinal spot in the Women's Asia Cup Rising Stars, here on Tuesday.

Brief scores: Nepal: 78 all out in 18 overs (Minnu Mani 3-8, Tanuja Kanwar 4-12, Radha Yadav 2-17) lt to India A: 82/3 in 7.5 overs (Dinesh Vrinda 39 n.o.).

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

T20 WC: South Africa vs UAE **(11 am)**, Pakistan vs Namibia **(3 pm)**, India vs Netherlands **(7 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network**, **JioHotstar**.

Ranji Trophy semis: Uttarakhand vs Karnataka, Bengal vs J&K **(Day 4, 9:30 am)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Khel**, **JioHotstar**.

FOOTBALL

CL playoffs: Qarabag vs Newcastle **(11:15 pm)**; Bodo vs Inter, Brugge vs Atletico, Olympiacos vs Leverkusen **(all 1:30 am, Thursday)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network**, **SonyLIV**.

EPL: Wolves vs Arsenal **(1:30 am, Thursday)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Select 1**, **JioHotstar**.

TENNIS

ATP 500: Rio Open **(round of 16, 12:30 am, Thursday)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

ATP 500: Qatar Open **(round of 16, 3 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

FORMULA 1

Pre-Season Testing: Day 1 **(12:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

OTHERS

Winter Olympics: Day 12 **(1:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **JioHotstar**.

CRICKET RANJI TROPHY

Solid Karnataka in complete control

Former champs reduce Uttarakhand to 149/5 after posting 736 all out

LUCKNOW, PTI

Karnataka set one foot in the Ranji Trophy final as they piled a mammoth 700-plus first-innings total and then reduced Uttarakhand to 149 for 5 on Day 3 of the semi-final here on Tuesday.

Karnataka, who had closed Day 2 at a commanding 689 for six after batting for two full days, opted not to declare on Day 3, with overnight batters Ravichandran Smaran and Vidyadhar Patil continuing their innings. The team eventually folded at 736, having batted a massive 194.4 overs in total.

The move seemed designed not only to further demoralise the opposition but also to ensure there was zero chance of losing the contest, maintaining complete control over the game.

Smaran (overnight 121 not out) and Patil (overnight 35 not out) added 28 runs to the overnight total before the former was dismissed for 135. Patil eventually reached a half-century, finishing with 54 off 114 balls. Most of his runs came from singles and twos, with two boundaries and a six to show for his efforts.

The departure of Smaran and Patil soon brought an end to the Karnataka innings, which had been built around a stellar 141 from opener KL Rahul and a commanding 232 from skipper Devdutt Padikkal, setting up their dominant position in the match.

Faced with the gargantuan first-innings total of the opposition, Uttarakhand were left reeling at 149 for 5, still needing another 587 runs to wipe out the eight-time champions' lead.

Uttarakhand's teenaged right-arm pacer Aditya Rawat claimed four wickets for 154 runs, while veteran spinner Mayank Mishra bagged three scalps for 173. However, their efforts were unable to mask the overall ineffectiveness of the bowling attack, as Karnataka's batters dominated throughout.

Karnataka could likely make Uttarakhand bat again and bowl them out, with two full days still remaining in the contest, giving them ample time to seal a dominant victory.

On the same wicket, Karnataka's bowlers, led by pacer Vidyadhar Patil (2/26), made quick inroads, dismissing openers Bhupen Lalwani (15) and Prashant Chopra (5) to leave Uttarakhand struggling at 37 for 2. The pressure mounted as the score soon became 81 for 4, before a brief resistance from Lakshya Raichandani (52 not out off 166 balls) and Jagadeesha Suchith (21) added 43 runs for the fifth wicket, taking them to 124.

However, their fightback was cut short when Suchith was clean-bowled by Indian pacer Prasidh Krishna.

SCORE BOARD

KARNATAKA (I Innings O/n: 689/6): KL Rahul c&b Aditya 141 (211b, 11x4, 5x6), Mayank Agarwal c Chopra b Aditya 5 (32b, 1x4), Devdutt Padikkal c Rawat b Raichandani 232 (330b, 29x4, 3x6), Karun Nair c Rawat b Negi 60 (105b, 8x4, 1x6), Smaran R st Rawat b Mayank 135 (216b, 12x4), Shreyas Gopal b Aditya 0 (6b), Kruthik Krishna b Avneesh 60 (103b, 6x4, 1x6), Vidyadhar Patil c Rawat b Aditya 54 (144b, 2x4, 1x6), Vijaykumar Vyshak c Raichandani b Mayank 0 (7b), Shikhar Shetty b Mayank 12 (18b, 3x4), Prasidh Krishna (not out) 1 (2b). Extras (NB-6, W-8, B-11, LB-6, pen 5) 36. **TOTAL (all out, 194.4 overs) 736.**
Fall of wickets: 1-18 (Agarwal), 2-296 (Rahul), 3-425 (Karun), 4-484 (Padikkal), 5-485 (Shreyas), 6-608 (Kruthik), 7-717 (Smaran), 8-717 (Vyshak), 9-734 (Shikhar).
Bowling: Abhay Negi 34-5-118-1, Janmejay Joshi 29-5-94-0, Aditya Rawat 34.4-3-154-4, Mayank Mishra 42-3-173-3, Jagadeesha Suchith 10-0-43-0, Avneesh Sudha 35-2-107-1, Lakshya Raichandani 10-1-25-1.
UTTARAKHAND (I Innings): Bhupen Lalwani c Krishna b Patil 15 (53b, 3x4), Prashant Chopra lbw Vidyadhar 5 (13b), Avneesh Sudha 27 (82b, 3x4), Lakshya Raichandani (batting) 52 (166b, 10x4), Kunal Chandela c Rahul b Shreyas 12 (19b, 2x4), Jagadeesha Suchith b Prasidh 21 (45b, 3x4), Saurabh Rawat (batting) 10 (37b, 2x4). Extras (LB-4, NB-1, W-2). 7. **TOTAL (for 5 wkts, 69 overs) 149. Fall of wickets:** 1-5 (Prashant), 2-37 (Bhupen), 3-61 (Avneesh), 4-81 (Chandela), 5-124 (Suchith).
Bowling: Vidyadhar Patil 13-3-26-2, Prasidh Krishna 15-2-42-1, Vijaykumar Vyshak 13-2-30-1, Shikhar Shetty 18-9-24-0, Shreyas Gopal 10-3-23-1.

Vidyadhar Patil picked up two wickets as Karnataka claimed five of Uttarakhand's first innings wickets on the third day of their Ranji Trophy semifinal. PTI

J&K within touching distance of maiden final

KALYANI (WEST BENGAL), PTI: Auqib Nabi delivered a performance to remember, claiming a nine-wicket match haul as his counter-attacking 42 at No. 9 has put Jammu and Kashmir on the cusp of a historic maiden Ranji Trophy final appearance after bundling out Bengal for 99 on day three, here on Tuesday.

Even a superb effort from an out-of-favour Mohammed Shami, who returned with career-best figures of 8/90 from 22.1 overs, could not prevent Bengal's slide as the home team collapsed inexplicably in a little over one session, lasting just two-and-a-half hours -- 25.1 overs to be precise.

Auqib Nabi

Set a modest 126-run target, Jammu and Kashmir reached 43/2 at stumps, needing 83 more runs with two full days remaining. Jammu and Kashmir lost Shubham Khajuria (1) and Yawer Hasan (6) to Akash Deep in successive overs, but left-hander Shubham Pundir looked composed in his unbeaten 23 off 37 balls, striking four crisp boundaries.

Brief scores: Bengal: 328 & 99 all out in 25.1 overs (Auqib Nabi 4-36, Sunil Kumar 4-27, Yudhvir Singh 2-29) vs J&K:(O/n: 198/5): 302 all out in 76.1 overs (Abdul Samad 82, Kanhaiya Wadhawan 29, Abid Mushtaq 27, Paras Dogra 58, Aquib Nabi 42, Yudhvir Singh 33; Mohammed Shami 8-90, Mukesh Kumar 2-78) & 43/2 in 13 overs (Akash Deep 2-12).

Royals seek indemnity waiver for Jaipur venue

AHMEDABAD, PTI: Racing against time to make the stadium match-ready for the IPL, Rajasthan Royals have sought an indemnity waiver from the state government to host matches in Jaipur following concerns raised by an independent audit firm and the BCCI over venue preparedness.

While Bengaluru's Chinnaswamy has got the government's nod to host RCB games for the upcoming season, there is still no clarity over the home venue for Rajasthan Royals.

With the lack of clarity over the Sawai Mansingh Stadium (SMS), the BCCI has not been able to share the final IPL schedule with the franchises. Sources said that the Rajasthan State Sports Council (RSSC) has dismissed the majority of the safety concerns raised by Tata Projects and despite BCCI ranking the stadium is the lowest in terms of fan experiences.

Advaith seven-for steers Caravan into semifinals

BENGALURU, DHNS: Advaith V Gowda picked up a sensational seven-for as Caravan Cricketers eased to a thumping 10-wicket win over Johnson Cricket Club to seal their semifinal spot in the KSCA Group I, Division V league cum Knockout tournament for the JB Mallaradhya Shield here.

LOCAL CRICKET

Johnson CC, having elected to bat first, were cheaply shot out for a mere 93 in 23.5 overs as Advaith bagged 7/21 at an economy of 2.38 in 8.5 overs. KC Cariappa also chipped in with 2/13.

Chasing a modest target of 94 for victory, Caravan Cricketers, riding on contributions from openers Navneeth V Raj (47 not out) and Darshan SS (44 not out), romped home in just 13.3 overs.

Brief scores: At Kreeda Kshetra: Johnson Cricket Club: 93 all out in 23.5 overs (Somashekar K 29; Advaith V Gowda 7-21, KC Cariappa 2-13) lt to Caravan Cricketers: 96 for no loss in 13.3 overs (Navneeth V Raj 47 n.o., Darshan SS 44 n.o.).
At Kini Sports Arena: YMCA Cricket Club (3): 89 all out in 34.2 overs (Shivaraj R 47; Suraj S Kamath 3-19, Anoop 2-10, Chandru Palandira Aiyanna 3-14, Rahul Menon 2-11) lt to Mathikere Cricket Club: 90/2 in 18.4 overs (MS Bhandage 36 n.o.)
At IAF: Viveknagar Cricketers: 144 all out in 45.2 overs (Youthesh Sagar 42, Manu AG 34; Sunil Kumar DH 3-8, Madhusudan R 2-29, Amit Verma 3-23) lt to National Cricketers: 145/6 in 37.5 overs (Suneel Raju 57; Samkrupakaran N 2-16).
At BGS: City Cricketers (2): 187 all out in 46.1 overs (Emon Bhanj 91; C Abilash 3-19, Vishal Sanjay Kumar 2-36, Murali A 2-23) lt to Young Cricketers (1): 190/9 in 49 overs (Asit Kumar 71; Jadav Mahesh 2-30, Pradeep Tamrakar 3-37).

Sahaja fights back to enter round of 16

Wild card Vaishnavi goes past Shruti; Andreeva through after Huergo retires

HITA PRAKASH
BENGALURU, DHNS

India's Sahaja Yamalapalli rallied to beat Dayeon Back of Korea in the KPB Trust ITF Women's Open W100 on Tuesday.

Sahaja Yamalapalli's opening round campaign at the KPB Trust ITF Women's Open W100 on Tuesday bore a stark resemblance to her round 1 contest a year ago at the same event. Both were played on court 1 of the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium here, both were three-set encounters against higher-ranked opponents and in both matches, India's top-ranked female singles player began on a high, lost her way in between only to fight back and clinch a victory.

On a sunny yet pleasant afternoon in Cubbon Park, world No. 416 Sahaja was once again tested and pushed to the brink, this time by 306-ranked Dayeon Back of Korea, before the Indian churned out a 6-2, 1-6, 6-2 win to advance to the second round of the premier ITF tournament. Capitalising on another break point in the fifth, Sahaja held all her service games to race away with the first set. The ball striking, however, which was free-flowing in the opening set quickly began to desert the 25-year-old home girl in the second. Unforced errors and Dayeon running to successfully return every ball meant that the Korean 24-year-old clinched the second set to get back into the match.

Trading two breaks each in the third, Sahaja found her missing rhythm when the scores were tied at 2-2 at one set apiece. With the forehand packing a punch and an extra kick in the serve, Sahaja dominated to claim four games in a row to close out the match in two hours and 18 minutes.

"Yeah, well, it started off well. In the second, I mean, I was fighting but I wasn't feeling the ball very well in the second. Maybe I was being too passive," said Sahaja in a post-match conversation. "I wasn't letting my arm go through and that was causing me to make mistakes. But I kind of regrouped and that helped," she added while sharing that she felt physically a lot better than she has in the past few tournaments where Sahaja claimed she wasn't at her healthy best.

Meanwhile, in the battle of Indian wild card entrants, Vaishnavi Adkar got the better of Shruti Ahlawat 6-1, 7-6 (6) to book her spot in the next round.

In the other singles match, Russia's Erika Andreeva survived a tough opening set through a tie-breaker against Argentina's Nicole Fossa Huergo. However, a physical issue appeared to be troubling Nicole saw 30-year-old retire early in the second set that saw Erika advancing.

Results (round 1, prefix denotes seedings): Singles: Sahaja Yamalapalli (Ind) bt Dayeon Back (Kor) 6-2, 1-6, 6-2; Vaishnavi Adkar (Ind) bt Shruti Ahlawat (Ind) 6-1, 7-6 (6); 8-Mai Hontama (Jpn) bt Diletta Cherubini (Ita) 6-2, 6-1; Erika Andreeva (Rus) bt Nicole Fossa Huergo (Arg) 7-6 (12), 1-0 (retd).

Oftebro wins nordic combined

TESERO (ITALY), AP

Norway's Jens Luraas Oftebro won his second Nordic combined gold medal at the Milan Cortina Winter Games after the large hill ski jump and 10-kilometer ski race on Tuesday.

Johannes Lamparter of Austria won his second silver and Ilkka Herola of Finland won bronze.

The event begins with a single ski jump in the morning where distance and style points are computed into a time advantage for the best jumper.

The rest of the field starts the cross-country ski race behind the leader according to the ranking from their jump.

Japan's Ryota Yamamoto got an eight-second head start over Lamparter after the ski jump and Norway's Andreas Skoglund started 16 seconds back. Oftebro, who won the normal hill event last week, started 22 seconds behind in fifth place. Herola started 32 seconds back in seventh place.

Jens Luraas Oftebro

USA, Canada in final

The USA will face women's hockey champions Canada in the Olympic final but they had contrasting semifinal victories on Monday, reports AFP from Milan.

The Americans impressed as they glided through their last-four match-up with a 5-0 win against Sweden.

Canada needed two goals from Marie-Philip Poulin to beat the Swiss in a far tighter game, giving her an Olympic record 20 goals in her career.

Girona damage Barca's title hopes

GIRONA (SPAIN), AFP

Spanish champions Barcelona fell to a damaging 2-1 defeat at Girona on Monday to leave them trailing Real Madrid by two points at the top of La Liga.

Los Blancos beat Real Sociedad on Saturday to overtake the Catalans and Hansi Flick's side could not defeat Girona in an gripping derby clash to reclaim the lead.

Teenage star Lamine Yamal **(in pic)** missed a penalty for Barcelona, who took the lead through defender Pau Cubarsi just before the hour mark.

However goals from Thomas Lemar and Fran Beltran helped Girona, 12th, mount an impressive comeback.

"In the end Girona deserved it, they had a lot of chances, we defended very badly," admitted Flick.

"We are not in a good mood, not in a good moment, I gave the team two days off because I think it's important they reset.

"There's a long way (to go), we're now in second, now we have to fight for first place in the table." Barca were still licking their wounds after a heavy 4-0 defeat by Atletico Madrid in the Copa del Rey first-leg semi-final last week, and this defeat made things even worse.

"We have to improve because they can't score these two goals against us," Cubarsi told DAZN.

"We have to be self-critical, we didn't play a great game, we have to improve, but now we have to rest and charge our batteries."

Both sides were attacking with abandon in a very open first half and it was remarkable they went in goalless at the break.

Raphinha whipped a shot narrowly wide and Yamal fired straight at Girona goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga when through on goal. At the other end Ukrainian striker Vladyslav Vanat missed a slew of presentable opportunities.

Ferran Torres fired a good chance wide for Barca and Raphinha drove against the upright as Flick's side pushed for the opener.

Results: Girona: 2 (Lemar 62nd, Beltran 87th) bt Barcelona: 1 (Cubarsi 59th).

Arsenal face Mansfield, Newcastle host Man City

LONDON, AFP: League One Mansfield were handed a home draw against Premier League leaders Arsenal in the FA Cup fifth round draw on Monday as Newcastle face Manchester City.

Mansfield produced the only shock of note so far in the fourth round by coming from behind to win 2-1 at top tier Burnley on Saturday.

Arsenal put third tier opposition to the sword on Sunday as four first-half goals beat Wigan 4-0 at the Emirates.

Mikel Arteta's men remain on course for an unprecedented quadruple, as do City, but Pep Guardiola's men face a far tougher fifth draw draw.

City dumped Newcastle out of the League Cup earlier this month and the sides will meet for a fifth time this season in the last 16.

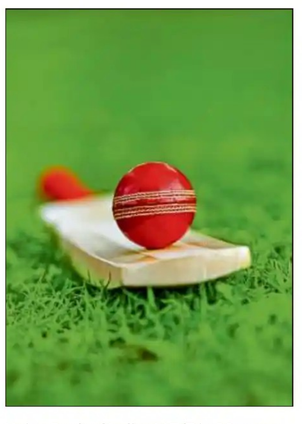
Whereas Chelsea face a trip to Hollywood-backed Wrexham.

Full draw (Mar 6-9): Fulham v Southampton; Port Vale or Bristol City v Sunderland; Newcastle v Manchester City; Leeds v Norwich; Mansfield v Arsenal; Wolves v Liverpool; Wrexham v Chelsea; West Ham v Macclesfield or Brentford.

Sai Susheel stars with bat & ball in BEMRC win over ITI Sports Club

BENGALURU, DHNS

Sai Susheel Reddy's overall show of 107 runs off 61 balls and 2/32 bowling figures helped BEMRC Cricket power past ITI Sports Club by 31 runs in their KSCA Group II, Division II league cum knockout tournament here.



Brief scores: BEMRC Cricket: 168/4 in 20 overs (Sai Susheel Reddy 107, Srinivasmk 30) bt ITI SC: 131/9 in 19 overs (Joseph Zion Raj T 31, Gautam G Gaokar 31 n.o.; Pradeep Kumar S 3-29, Hemanth Patil 2-23, Sai Susheel Reddy 2-32).
SWR Central Workshop, Ashokpuram, Mysore: 177/7 in 20 overs (Srinidhi V 44, Pralanjal N Nagesha 26, Varun Ramesh 58; Alok Kumar R 2-34, Dhinesh K 2-37) bt BEML SC, KGF: 152/9 in 20 overs (Dhinesh K 72; Shashank HC 5-22, Sibtain Ali 2-26, Dhanush B 2-27).
VISL CC, Bhadravathi: 66 all out in 12.1 overs (Ashish Sharma 2-23, Gautam Kumar 5-21, Durgesh Singh Bhadauria 2-6) lt to GTRE SC: 67/8 in 15.3 overs (N Boloor 2-5, Yogi 4-17).
BEML Rail Coach: 190/4 in 20 overs (Ashwin Santosh 87, Vineeth Manjunath 65) lt to Infosys CC: 192/6 in 20 overs (Swaroop SH 101 n.o., Arjun Aravind Potti 42; Harsh Oza 2-34, Gopi K 2-16).
Commercial Tax CC: 146 all out in 17.1 overs (Dhruv Modhe 63; Sampath Kumar M 2-19, Ayush Ponnappa BU 4-21, Darshan S 2-40) lt to BWSSB Employees Association: 147/7 in 19.2 overs (Adarsh MA 39; Aries KA 2-31, Jeevan CM 3-10).
Hutti Gold Mines CC, Hutti: 98/9 in 20 overs (Apsar Pasha 32 n.o.; Aneesh Maiya G 2-16, Nikhil Vedanth RV 2-18) lt to L&T Construction Equipments SC: 100/1 in 13 overs (Pruthviraj KB 51 n.o., Danson Maben 29).
Union Bank of India: 117/7 in 20 overs (Ganesha Banagara B 29, Vinu Prasad 31; Bharath N 2-24) lt to South Railway Institute, Mysore: 121/1 in 12.3 overs (Nishit Srivatsa UB 65 n.o., Bharath N 37 n.o.). Indian Air Force, Jalahalli: 145/6 in 18 overs (Rushi B Shetty 68 n.o., Ashish Kumar 42; Muralidhara J 4-28) bt Karnataka Government Secretariat Club: 81 all out in 18 overs (Abhishek J 36; Hareesh UK 3-10, Arnav Kush 3-20).
CMTI Club: 117 all out in 18.4 overs (Nandhan V 50; Sanath S Nair 3-10, Venkatesh N 2-14, Vishal Kumar S 2-22) lt to CIL SC: 118/3 in 19.2 overs (Aryan BV 27, V Chethan 49 n.o.; Krishnaswamy KR 2-23).
ADE SC: 163/6 in 19.5 overs (Chandru 36, Pratham R 27, Pravesh KM 62; Venkata Rao Runku 2-42) bt EPF Sports & Recreation Club: 138/7 in 20 overs (P Kiran Kumar 38, Gaurav Venkatesh 50; Shabahat Hussain 4-21, Deepak Singh 2-29).
Deccan Herald & Prajavani SC: 167/7 in 20 overs (Nikhil HS 109 n.o.) bt BDSA, South Western Railways, Bangalore: 125/8 in 20 overs (Pralayakaveri Vijaya Kumar 30, Y James Prasanna Kumar 45; Vikram 2-18, Saravanan S 2-13).
Karnataka State Police CC: 168/6 in 20 overs (Shiva Muttu SJ 46, Sunil Kumar BC 32, Somashekara Murthy KS 42 n.o.; Aaron K Joseph 2-33) bt Bhagirathi Group: 153/7 in 20 overs (Ambresh K 77 n.o.; Ganesh Kumar B 3-31, Akhilesh YG 2-19).
LRDE SC: 161/9 in 20 overs (Karan Raghavendra 52, Satish Kumar T 27; Ramesh BS 2-30, Pradeepkumar KR 2-27, Murali N 2-27) bt Bangalore Dairy SC: 134 all out in 19.3 overs (Kumar Raj D 34; Kartik Kumar Jha 4-18, Sunny Kanchi 3-23).
BHEL EDN SC: 105/8 in 20 overs (Sunil BB 30, Susheel Gowda SN 30; Sanjay 2-28) lt to Railway Institute, Krishnarajapuram: 107/2 in 17.1 overs (Likith Gowda M 39 n.o.).
Triton Sports Club, Mysore: 178/2 in 20 overs (Yashwanth Patel 77, Srithan V 86 n.o.) bt BHEL EPD CSBD: 69 all out in 15.1 overs (Prazwal TS 2-21, Ishaan S 2-10, Shane Ryan 4-11).
Titan Company Ltd CC: 172/6 in 20 overs (Mohith BA 49, Karna Surya Vamshi 60, Vineet Ashok 29 n.o.; Roshan Raju 2-29) bt BEML (2) SC, Mysore: 82 all out in 14.4 overs (Swayam Raje Urs V 34; Srinivas Prasad N 2-21, David V Bird 5-12).
ABB CC: 154/7 in 20 overs (Akshay Santosh Solankar 35, Muthukumaran M 27, Ravi Babu Kamble 41 n.o.; Umesh KR 3-22, Fakruddin Goususab Agadi 2-9) lt to NAL Staff Club: 155/3 in 18.1 overs (Naveen V 25, Mahesha N 49 n.o., Praveen Kumar JD 27 n.o.).
Bosch SC, Bangalore: 182/5 in 20 overs (Samarth Srinivas 36, Sharath Srinivas 112 n.o.; Nishanth Gopal 2-27) bt ITC SC: 109 all out in 15.5 overs (Kishore Dutt N 45, Akshay Krishanamurthy 33; Amogh R 2-16, Geeth Sagar Netala 3-6, Nanda Kishore B 2-10).

Sachidananda, Sachith shine for MVFC

BENGALURU, DHNS: Sachidananda S and Sachith HS starred with four and three goals, respectively, to propel Mysore Vijayanagara FC to a comfortable 9-2 win over Bangalore Warriors FC in the BDFA B Division League at the Bangalore Football Stadium here on Tuesday.

LOCAL FOOTBALL

While Sachidananda opened the scoreboard in the fourth minute and followed it up by finding the back of the net in the 12th, 40th and 52nd minutes, Sachith stole the spotlight in the second half by firing in the 67th, 68th and 79th minutes.

Results: Group A: Mysore Vijayanagara FC: 9 (Sachidananda S 4th, 12th, 40th, 52nd, Gagan R Patil 57th, Sachith HS 67th, 68th, 79th, Sharath Singh 72nd) bt Bangalore Warriors FC: 2 (Prabhakaran 24th, Ajay A 60th).
Group B: FC Mangalore: 5 (Mohammad Fawas K 40+2nd, Madhav KM 58th, Muhammad Shuhaib 68th, Yangambam Peter 74th, Adarsh NS 80+1st) bt William FC: 0; Young Blues Elite FC: 2 (Elroy Jacob Elvish 48th, Letchungam Droihang 75th) bt Shooterz FC: 1 (Abishek Babu 15th); Revive FC: 5 (Godson Shaji 13th, Muhammad Fasil 20th, 26th, Rehaan Rai 36th, 53rd) bt Infinite Belagavi FC: 2 (Vedant Jagannath Sutar 11th, Kaushik Patil 80+1st).

'Can't stress on couple of failures'

SIDNEY KIRAN
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

Chugging along smoothly and looking every bit the team to beat, the only hiccup for India so far in this ICC T20 World Cup has been destructive opener Abhishek Sharma's inability to open his account in the two games he has played.

Taking the field despite suffering from stomach illness, the 25-year-old got out for a first-ball duck in the first match against the USA in Mumbai. He missed the second game vs Namibia after being hospitalised but departed for a four-ball duck versus Pakistan in Colombo on Sunday.

The key cog in India's immensely successful run over the last 20 months, Abhishek has picked up four noughts in his last seven innings. While it has not reached worrying signs yet as benefit of the doubt must be given to the southpaw as he has just recovered from illness, it's no secret that teams are now studying him deeply to find ways to get him out early.

India's batting coach Sitanshu Kotak, addressing the media on Tuesday ahead of the final Group A game versus minnows Netherlands, said the think-tank is not worried and confident about the Punjabi turning things around quickly. "Before falling ill, Abhishek had made runs in the preceding games. Sometimes, in T20s, a 10-ball 30 is very important. It's not like he hasn't scored runs. We don't focus on just one batter but all of them.

Sitanshu Kotak

"T20 is a high-risk game. Players will get out (in going for quick runs). If we start stressing (on a couple of failures), then players will come under unnecessary pressure. He's in a good form, he's got a clear plan, he's got a clear mindset, and that is what matters for us."

The game against Netherlands at the Narendra Modi Stadium offers India a chance to get used to the conditions as they'll be playing South Africa in the first Super Eights here on Sunday. If they make it to the final and don't play Pakistan, the title clash will also be here.

India hope for Abhishek TO REGAIN HIS TOUCH

Already in the Super 8s, hosts may try new combination

SIDNEY KIRAN
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

Soaring high following a comfortable win over arch-rivals Pakistan, a dominant India take on the Netherlands in the proverbial 'David vs Goliath' clash on Wednesday night at a gigantic venue where they'll be hoping their primary aggressor, Abhishek Sharma, regains his destructive touch ahead of bigger battles starting this weekend.

Ever since making his international debut in the T20I series against Zimbabwe in Harare right after India won the ICC T20 World Cup for the second time in 2024, the 25-year-old Abhishek has been one of the main forces in Men In Blue's smashing run in the format over the last 20 months.

Fearless to the core, the opener was the spark plug for the high-octane cricket India have been dishing out consistently that has flattened one opponent after another. In 40 T20I games so far, the youngster has smashed 1297 runs with two centuries and eight fifties at a jaw-dropping strike rate of 193.29. When he gets going, quite literally no bowler can stop him nor any ground is big enough to limit the damage.

But the high-risk high-reward style, something the team management has given full licence to each batter, has its own dangers. While the ball can fly into the stands on his day, it can even find the fielders when it's not. And Abhishek, who was beset with a stomach illness and even hospitalised after India's opening Group A game in the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup, has found it the hard way. He's got four ducks in his last seven innings, including two on the trot in this showpiece tournament.

Although his early dismissals have been offset by Ishan Kishan and other batters, Abhishek would be eager to find his mojo in the biggest event of his fledgling career. He arrived buzzing with confidence and the game against the minnows the Netherlands offers him a chance to get into his stride. It'll probably help his cause if he takes his time at the start, gets his eye in, and then explodes. His eagerness to start going on a rampage right from the first ball has brought about his early demise.

LIVE 7 PM, STAR SPORTS

India's Abhishek Sharma warms-up during a practice session, ahead of their T20 World Cup Group A match against the Netherlands at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. PTI

Defending champions India may also be looking to test a few things in the last Group A game here before they take on South Africa in the first Super Eights game on Sunday at the very same Narendra Modi Stadium. Spinning all-rounder Washington Sundar, who has just recovered from an injury, could get a game so that he finds his bearings after not having played a competitive game since the opening ODI versus New Zealand on January 11. Since vice-captain Axar Patel can't be benched, then the only option would be to play Sundar in place of Varun Chakravarthy.

For the Netherlands, who could have upset Pakistan in their opening game if they had held their nerve, the match against India is nothing but a learning experience. Hardly in their lives have they played in a venue as big as this stadium, and if it's sold out, the 1.2 lakh capacity ground would be quite intimidating for them. Also, the only time they get to meet the big Test-playing nations is in the World Cups, and more often than not the primary thought in their minds is to put up a semblance of a fight rather than dream about a win.

India have played the Netherlands just once in T20Is, at the 2022 T20 World Cup in Sydney where they romped to a comfortable 56-run win. It should be another walk in the park for them unless the Netherlands do the unthinkable like the famous biblical tale.

SQUADS: INDIA: Suryakumar Yadav (capt), Ishan Kishan, Sanju Samson, Rinku Singh, Axar Patel (vice-capt), Abhishek Sharma, Shivam Dube, Hardik Pandya, Tilak Varma, Washington Sundar, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Varun Chakravarthy.
NETHERLANDS: Scott Edwards (capt), Colin Ackermann, Noah Croes, Bas de Leede, Aryan Dutt, Fred Klaassen, Kyle Klein, Michael Levitt, Zach Lion-Cachet, Max O'Dowd, Logan van Beek, Timm van der Gugten, Roelof van der Merwe, Paul van Meekeren, Saqib Zulfiqar.

Zimbabwe-Ireland washout dumps Australia out

African side joins Lanka in next stage with a match left

PALLEKELE, PTI

Zimbabwe on Tuesday entered the Super 8 stage of the T20 World Cup after their crucial Group B match against Ireland was washed out due to rain, a result that also eliminated former champions Australia and Ireland from the tournament.

Both teams were awarded one point each. The shared points took Zimbabwe to five, enough to secure a Super 8 berth. They will face India in their opening Super 8 match on February 26 in Chennai.

"As much as we have achieved, it is just a tick in the box and not the whole box. There will be a small celebration, but we will then focus on the next game. It is just a small tick in what we have set out to achieve," said Zimbabwe skipper Sikandar Raza.

Zimbabwe, who failed to qualify for the 2024 editions, became the seventh team to get a ticket to the Super 8s, completing group G1 also comprising India, South Africa and West Indies.

Zimbabwe will play their final group match against co-hosts Sri Lanka on February 19.

Zimbabwe captain Sikandar Raza. AFP

Group G2 consists of Sri Lanka, England, New Zealand and either Pakistan or USA. All their matches will be held in Colombo and Pallekele.

"Myself and the coach, we will sit down, we have the data on them (Sri Lanka) and we will try to win that game. Qualifying has not changed our ultimate goal," Raza said.

"Everyone loves an underdog story. Every condition we find ourselves in, if we get a day or two to train, we try and learn those conditions. We train, try and assess the conditions, see the previous games (at that venue), and try to put together a good game of cricket."

With table-toppers Sri Lanka (6) having already qualified for the Super 8s, the contest held significant importance for Zimbabwe and Ireland.

Group B

Teams	M	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
Sri Lanka (Q)	3	3	0	0	6	2.462
Zimbabwe (Q)	3	2	0	1	5	1.984
Ireland	4	1	2	1	3	0.150
Australia	3	1	2	0	2	0.414
Oman	3	0	3	0	0	-4.546

South Africa hope for big-hitting Brevis to find form

NEW DELHI, PTI: South Africa would expect big-hitting youngster Dewald Brevis to regain his form against a struggling United Arab Emirates in their inconsequential final Group D fixture of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday.

South Africa are already through to the Super Eights with three wins, including a double Super Over cliffhanger against Afghanistan and a comprehensive seven-wicket thumping of New Zealand.

For UAE, it will be an opportunity to test their skills against the likes of Marco Jansen, Kagiso Rabada and Lungi Ngidi, a bowling attack which they don't get to face often at the international level as most of the Proteas players ply their trade in SA20, which clashes with their ILT20.

For South Africa, the match against UAE will be an extended practice game in which they would look to bat first and make full use of a placid track on offer at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground.

In the top four, Quinton de Kock, Aiden Markram and Ryan Rickleton have all got at least one fifty in the three games so far but Brevis, with scores of 6, 23 and 21, hasn't exactly displayed his potential.

Known as 'Baby AB' for batting similarities with the great AB de Villiers, Brevis' propensity to play irresponsible shots in between flashes of brilliance has proved to be a hindrance in taking the leap to the next level.

Dewald Brevis

LIVE 11 AM

Its is precisely for this reason that the 22-year-old is not yet considered on par with the likes of Shubman Gill, Harry Brook, and Yashasvi Jaiswal to name a few.

Even though the UAE attack doesn't even have bowlers with express pace, the belter at Kotla will give Brevis a chance to return to form before the big Super Eights game against India at Ahmedabad.

As far as changes in the playing eleven are concerned, it is unlikely that the batting set-up will be tinkered with but Markram might just want to rest his main fast bowlers Rabada and Ngidi, giving a chance to Anrich Nortje and teenager Kwena Maphaka.

For UAE, the onus of scoring runs will be on former Jamia Milia Islamia student Sohaib Khan, who has already scored successive fifties in the tournament and has been their batting mainstay.

Sloppy Pak find themselves in must-win situation again

COLOMBO, PTI

With their backs against the wall, former champions Pakistan will rely on their fragile batting to come good after the jolt against India and seal a Super 8s spot when they face struggling Namibia, in their final league fixture, here on Wednesday.

In Group A, title favourites India have already sealed their Super 8s berth after their handsome 61-run win over Pakistan the other day.

The second spot is now up for grabs, with the United States having their nose ahead of Pakistan.

Both teams have four points each but Pakistan are behind on Net Run Rate -- Pakistan have a negative NRR of -0.403, while the USA are comfortably placed at 0.788.

Pakistan's equation is simple -- win against the winless Namibia and make the cut as any slip-up could leave them relying on other permutation and combinations.

Led by Salman Ali Agha, Pakistan's campaign has suddenly entered a tense phase after what was meant to be a straightforward progression turned into a battle for survival following the defeat to India.

The spotlight will firmly be on their fragile batting -- including stalwart Babar Azam, openers Sahibzada Farhan and Saim Ayub and their skipper Agha -- which was exposed in their defeat to India in Colombo.

Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha leads a fragile batting line-up as his poor shot selection against India in lopsided defeat came under the scanner. PTI

Former Azam has been under pressure, especially after his seven-ball five against India, with calls for his exclusion growing louder.

After being reduced to 13 for 3 by India's pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya, Pakistan's middle order offered no resistance -- worrying sign even against a side like Namibia.

Openers Sahibzada and Ayub, along with the middle order, will also need to show greater application.

Pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi also struggled, claiming just one wicket while conceding over 31 runs in his two overs.

The only bright spot was Ayub, who had India's top order in a spot of bother with his three-wicket haul.

Pakistan's key worry is Afridi's inconsistency; his struggle with rhythm and control was glaring when he leaked 15 runs in the crucial final over, handing India the late momentum.

Against Namibia, Afridi must strike early as removing key batters in the first six overs will let Pakistan dictate the match.

Pakistan's powerplay frailties also remain a worry -- they managed barely 40 runs while losing four wickets in the last game.

Frequent middle-order shuffles have created a muddle, putting late-order acceleration in doubt.

LIVE 3 PM

Phillips, Rachin power New Zealand into Super 8s

CHENNAI, PTI: Glenn Phillips (**in pic**) was back at his best blasting the fastest fifty for New Zealand in T20 World Cup history as he and Rachin Ravindra struck fluent half-centuries to power them to an eight-wicket win over Canada and seal their Super 8s berth from Group D, here on Tuesday.

In a must-win contest for both teams, Canada, opting to bat, were powered by Yuvraj Samra's record-breaking 110 -- the youngest century-maker in T20 World Cup history -- but the 146-run unbroken Rachin-Phillips stand and an undisciplined bowling effort ultimately overshadowed the milestone knock.

Chasing 174, New Zealand rode on Rachin and Phillips' stand that came off just 73 balls, overhauling the target in 15.1 overs.

Phillips remained unbeaten on 76 from 36 balls with six sixes and four fours, while Rachin was 59 not out from 39 balls (4x4, 3x6) in their statement win.

The Kiwis finished their league campaign with six points and a net run rate of 1.227. Having already qualified, South Africa lead the group on net run rate and face UAE in their last league match.

Canada remain winless from three matches and next face Afghanistan in their final league fixture.

Canada struck early after a wayward opening over from Jaskaran Singh cost 14 runs, including a wide and a no-ball.

Finn Allen (21 off 8) counter-attacked before falling to a stunning diving catch by Shivam Sharma, while Tim Seifert departed soon after as New Zealand slipped to 30 for 2 in 3.1 overs.

However, Rachin and Phillips quickly turned the tide as New Zealand raced to 60 for 2 in the powerplay as Rachin cut and drove with authority, including a six over deep point and two boundaries in a 15-run fifth over.

Phillips, who was five off four balls at one stage, shifted gears after the powerplay.

Brief scores: Canada: 173/4 in 20 overs (Yuvraj Samra 110, Dilpreet Bajwa 36) lt to New Zealand: 176/2 in 15.1 overs (Rachin Ravindra 59 n.o., Glenn Phillips 76 n.o.). **Result:** New Zealand won by 8 wickets. **PoM:** Glenn Phillips.

Group D

Teams	M	W	L	Pts	NRR
South Africa (Q)	3	3	0	6	1.477
New Zealand (Q)	4	3	1	6	1.227
Afghanistan	3	1	2	2	-0.215
UAE	3	1	2	2	-0.797
Canada	3	0	3	0	-1.865

Nepal end 12-year-wait at T20 WC

MUMBAI, PTI: Kushal Bhurtel's early fireworks and Dipendra Singh Airee's unbeaten fifty helped Nepal end their 12-year-long winless run in the T20 World Cup with a seven-wicket triumph against Scotland in an inconsequential Group C match here on Tuesday.

Nepal had gone winless since 2014 when they beat Afghanistan and the Netherlands on T20 World Cup debut, but the Rhinos signed off from this edition with a memorable victory in front of more than 19,000 fans at the Wankhede Stadium here.

Chasing 171, Nepal responded with 171/3 in 19.2 overs with Airee's quickfire 50 not out off 23 balls, with three sixes and four fours, being the highlight of their spirited chase along with Bhurtel's (43) inspired start.

Gulsan Jha (24 not out) also chipped in with two towering sixes at a crucial juncture, putting on an unbeaten 73-run stand for the fourth wicket. Earlier, Bhurtel had a narrow escape when Brad Currie dropped a return catch and the Nepal opener rubbed salt on the wound with a huge six over long-on in the second over.

Brief scores: Scotland: 170/7 in 20 overs (George Munsey 27, Michael Jones 71, Brandon McMullen 25; Sompal Kami 3-25, Nandan Yadav 2-34) lt to Nepal: 171/3 in 19.2 overs (Kushal Bhurtel 43, Aasif Sheikh 33, Dipendra Singh Airee 50; Michael Leask 3-30). **Result:** Nepal won by 7 wkts. **PoM:** Dipendra Singh Airee.

Sinner cruises past Machac

DOHA, AFP

Jannik Sinner cruised to victory over Tomas Machac in the opening round of the Qatar Open on Monday in his first match since his unsuccessful Australian Open title defence.

The world No. 2 eased past the 31st-ranked Czech 6-1, 6-4 to set up a second-round meeting with Alexei Popyrin in Doha, where Carlos Alcaraz is the top seed this week. It was a convincing return to action for Sinner after his semifinal loss to Novak Djokovic at Melbourne Park last month.

Jannik Sinner. AFP

Meanwhile, Coco Gauff bounced back from her shock early exit in Doha last week with a comfortable victory over Anna Kalinskaya 6-4, 6-4 at the WTA 1000 event in Dubai on Tuesday.

CA plans to host BBL game in India, TNCA confirms discussions

MELBOURNE/CHENNAI, PTI

Cricket Australia (CA) is considering hosting a Big Bash League (BBL) game in India next season, preferably at the Chepauk in Chennai in a bid to tap into the lucrative market there, according to a report.

A senior Tamil Nadu Cricket Association office bearer confirmed the development with a rider that the idea is still at the nascent stage.

CA's bold move is part of a wider strategy to intertwine the lucrative Indian market with the BBL ahead of a near-certain sale of at least two of its eight franchises, according to a report in 'Sen Cricket'.

According to the report, two senior CA officials have travelled to India recently to chalk out the possibility of a game, possibly in Chennai.

"Head of business operations Phil Rigby and head of competition development and strategy Margot Harley flew to India as discussions ramp up around the logistics of an offshore game," the report read.

When a senior TNCA office bearer was contacted by PTI, he said: "Yes, two representatives came from Cricket Australia. Senior office-bearers were part of the discussions where the possibility of one BBL game per season was discussed.

"They have heard good things about MA Chidambaram Stadium and did a recce. However we are not the only venue they are looking at but TNCA can't commit unless we get a directive from the BCCI. It is the parent body that has to decide whether they will green light this proposal," the official, who didn't wish to be named, said.

The report said Perth Scorchers appear to be a logical choice to play in India.

Printed and published by B A Ravi on behalf of The Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd, at The Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd, Plot nos. 7-12, Kumbalgodu Industrial Area, Bengaluru - 560 074. Executive Editor: K V Subramanya (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act). Editorial Office: 75, M.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. E-mail: editor@deccanherald.co.in. Phone: 080-45557333, Editorial: 080-45557279/080-45557280, Circ: 080-45557204, Advt: 080-45557163/080-45557164. Also printed at Hubballi-Dharwad, Mangaluru, Kalaburagi, Davangere, Mysuru and Hosapete. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. RNI No 3608/57. Registered, Regn. No: KRNA/BGE/1027/2023-2025, posted at Bangalore PSO, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560 026. Website: www.printersmysore.com